38

TIM TRUMAN
ON LONE RANGER, JONAH HEX, AND MORE

GEN13
BEHIND IMAGE'S TEEN TEAM

...CLAWS AND EFFECT

WIZARD®

OCTOBER 1994
NUMBER 38
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THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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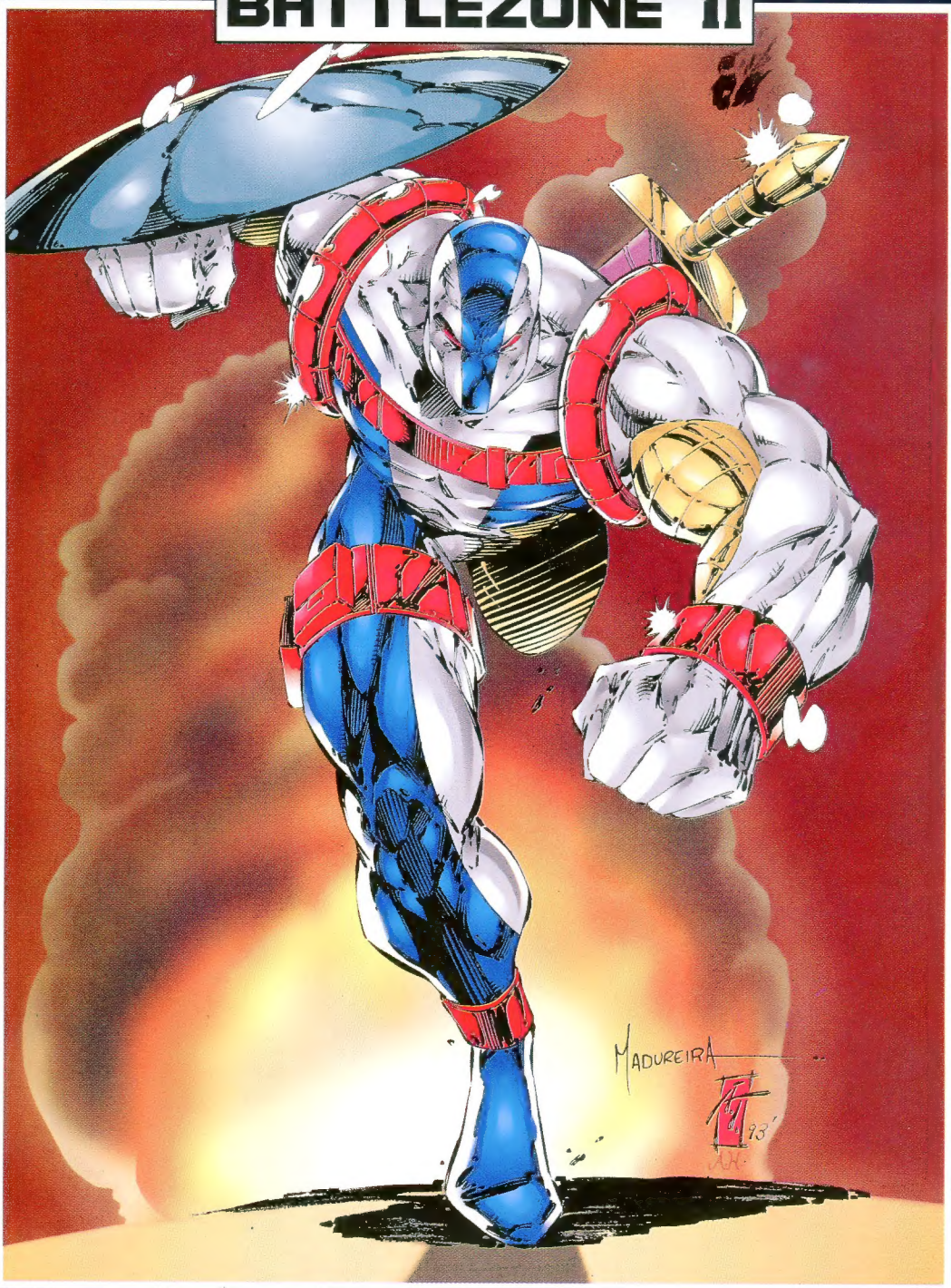

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Number 38
October 1994

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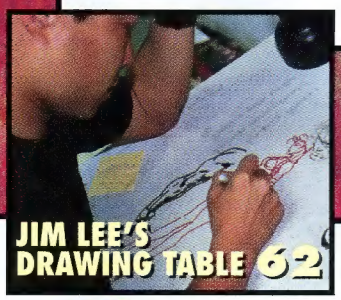

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WIZARD AND THE WIZARD LOGOTYPE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF WIZARD PRESS

Hey! *Order Lady Death #1/2 and avoid the kidney punch later. See page 48*

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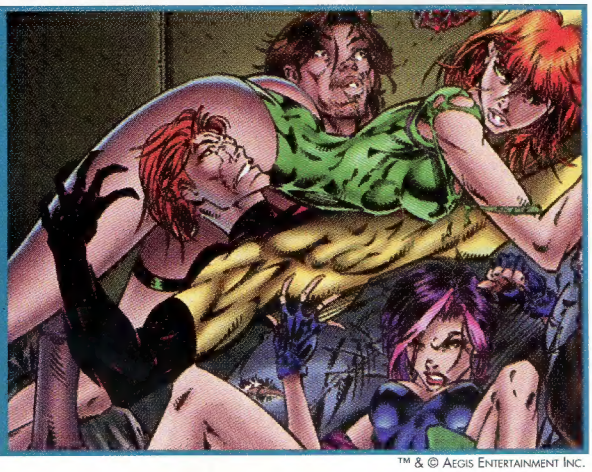
SHI ™ & © WILLIAM ELLIOTT TUCCI

SCOUT ™ & © TIMOTHY TRUMAN

Take a walk through the Wild West and beyond. Tim Truman is your guide on page 90.



Don't expect us to explain this...read the Gen13 feature on page 68.

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STATIC ™ & © MILESTONE MEDIA INC.

***Static* is a cool book, so why aren't it and the rest of the Milestone Universe flying off the shelves? Get the facts on page 80.**

A LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

Beavis and Butt-Heads.

¡Muy Caliente!

A special thanks to Adam and Andy Kubert for this issue's truly excellent cover. Adam handled the penciling chores on Wolvie, while Andy doodled the 'Tooth. Inker extraordinare Matthew Ryan inked 'er up and—pow!—one heck of a sweet cover. Thanks, guys—you did a great job.

Knowing that there would be civil unrest throughout most of the free world if we didn't cook up some hot goodies inside this ish, wait'll you see what we've jammed into this one. On top of the kickin' interviews with the Wolverine creative team and the fellas behind *Gen*[13], a serious look inside Milestone Media, an in-depth chat with Tim Truman, and our spotlight on the "Bad Girl" trend, we've also slapped together more contests than you can shake my partially inflated ego at. Scattered around with neither rhyme nor reason are contests to win a guitar signed by Lita Ford and Ozzy, plus chances to win Jim Lee's art table (!), to fly out west and hang with Leonard Nimoy, and to write an epitaph for a major comic character, *and* some awesome Fleer card products! With all that stuff, plus all of our regular departments and columns, this is easily our spiffiest issue to date. Hope you like it.

One last thing before I go. Though we usually talk about our softball antics in the Bullpen, I gotta let you know what happened on this past Saturday, July 16 (which will be known from now on as Dark Saturday, and not just because of the comet's collision with Jupiter that afternoon). On that fateful partly cloudy day, the mighty Wizard softball players lifted bats above heads, secured their powerful mitts to hands, and locked horns with Wow Comics from Bronx, N.Y., in a heated doubleheader...and our undefeated streak came to an end. We took the first game 8-4 but were edged out in the second game 10-8. So, doing what any red-blooded American publisher would do, I fired the obviously inept Wizard staff and replaced 'em with the fellas from Wow Comics.

And that was that. Enjoy the rest of the issue.

Gareb S. Shamus

大きいチーズ

THE GUIDE TO COMICS WIZARD

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Magic Words

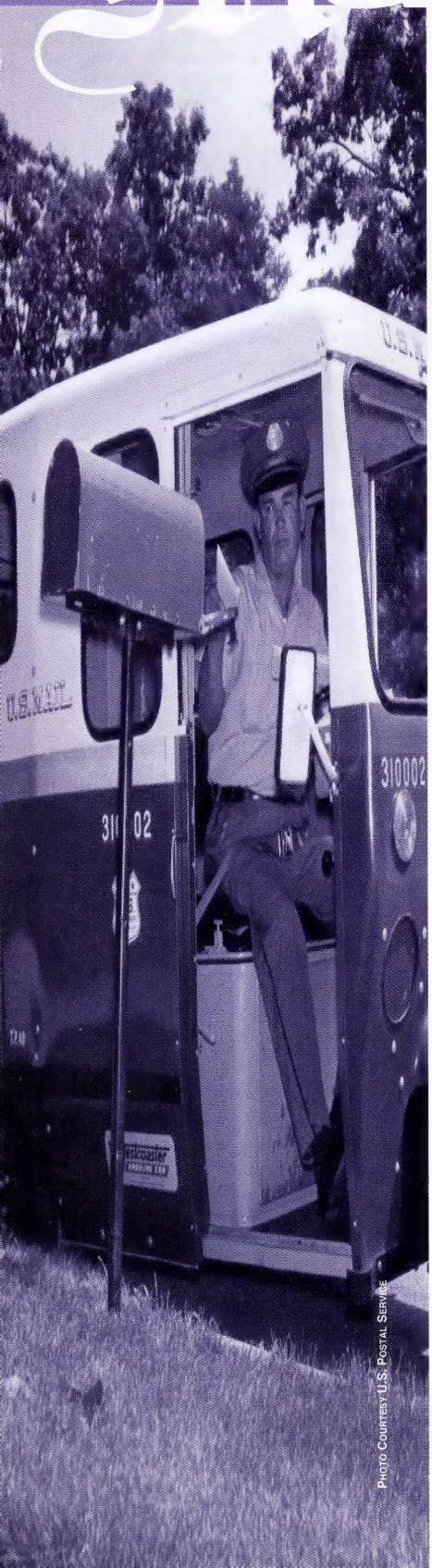

Photo Courtesy U.S. Postal Service

A couple tips o' the hat this month to start things out:

First, to our ol' pals and unsung heroes Tracey Altro and Dangerous Dan Reilly. Tracey types all these letters for me. Without her, I'd be about six months behind. Dangerous Dan does more research before 9 a.m. than most people do all day. Without either of them, this column would not be possible.

Second, to Justin Lines of Tempe, Ariz. Justin was smart enough to combine schoolwork with comics and did a little research project, a survey of comic retailers and their opinions on comic book violence. Justin was also kind enough to share his findings with us. In his small sample, Justin found that 86 percent of retailers surveyed thought that comics have become more violent over the past five years. Most retailers did not think that the level of violence in comics would adversely affect children, agreeing that movies and TV are just as violent, if not more so. Almost any Image Comics title and *Sandman Mystery Theatre* (Hey! My personal favorite!) were cited most often as very violent books.

Keep in mind that this was a small and informal survey. But the one stat that rings clear is that most people who are really on the inside in the comic world—the people who sell comics for a living—think that comics have become more violent. That begs the question: is there a problem here? Obviously, comics are a graphic medium and fist fights have sold books since day one. But has the whole aspect of gratuitous violence gone too far? Or is it just normal, given the nature of comics? Any opinions on the subject are welcome.

We'll start this month off with a couple of opinions regarding that comic character accessory of the year, the Big Gun.

Dear Wizard,

Lately, as I've entered the comic book world, I've noticed an unbelievable amount of titles out there that have the so-called superheroes packing pistols the size of Volkswagens.

How can someone carry a pistol—a small handgun, for crying out loud—that size? It's unrealistic. Sure, this is comics and it's not supposed to be real, but there is a fine line between unrealistic and downright ridiculous. The firepower those babies carry could probably level a small town.

Secondly, what can these characters do for the greater good except blow the hell out of each other? Who are these "heroes" supposedly protecting? Probably just the companies they represent. Has the industry sunk so low that they sacrifice the quality and integrity of the stories and characters for sales?

Big guns aren't necessary for a quality comic. *Sandman*, *Incredible Hulk*, and *Madman Comics* are all proof of that. To anyone who's still reading this letter, hear me, please: let's save this worthwhile industry.

Jason White
Prattville, AL

I don't profess to be a ballistics expert, but it seems to me that most of these peacemakers that comic characters are toting these days are so big they couldn't fire a bullet.

You're right in that the writers of *Madman Comics* and *Sandman* have yet to get the Big Gun fetish. But don't close the book on the Hulk yet...

Hulk ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Dear Wizard,

Why can't you guys tell Marvel to make the Hulk more interesting? Tell Marvel to give him a gun, a real big gun, like a plasma blaster or something. Give him one that isn't

man-made, have him get it from some alien. Or, since Bruce Banner is a scientist, let him make one of his own that looks real scary.

David Stone
Tyler, TX

Can we get something straight here? The Hulk is the world's mightiest mortal. The guy can hold up a mountain, juggle Greyhound buses, fight Thor to a standstill, and take a direct hit from a bazooka right in the chest without even getting mildly annoyed. *The last friggin' thing in the world the Hulk needs is a big gun!* It's like saying the U.S. Army should add slingshots to its arsenal. They've got nukes already!

The Hulk is strong enough to drop-kick the moon if he wants to. He needs a Big Gun like I need another all-you-can-eat dinner buffet. But it's already happened: Greenskin has been sportin' that dreaded accessory in many a recent ish. Sigh. Just give me the good ol' dumb green Hulk in torn-up purple pants any day.

Dear Wizard,

What are all of Spawn's powers?

Mike Farbo
Erie, PA

Near as I can tell, Spawn has the power to make green stuff come out of his hands and, occasionally, his eyes. He has the power to skip two issues without missing a beat. He has the power to make every comic geek in the world say, "Oh, Todd, we love you!" He has the ability to co-star in perhaps the lamest intercompany crossovers in history. He has the power to have a four-issue run of his title done by top-shelf writers and still suck.

But his most amazing and awesome power is the one that allows him to take all the criticism and crap thrown at him and his title and still sell the pants off anything else on the shelf. Truly amazing.

BORIS THE BEAR ™ & © JAMES DEAN SMITH

Hey Wizzy!

How come the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ain't been on your cover yet? They've been around for 10 years, guys! Give 'em a break!

And please tell me how much *Pre-Teen Dirty-Gene Kung-Fu Kangaroos* #1 is worth. Please?

Danelle Weeks
Troy, NY

Some of you may think this is one of those joke letters. "*Pre-Teen Dirty-What?*" you're probably mumbling to yourself. But it's not a joke. It's real.

Y'see, the Turtles were a parody themselves, poking fun at the top-selling books of the day, *X-Men* and *Daredevil*, which featured, well, teenage mutants and ninjas. The wild success of *TMNT* inspired imitators. First came the *Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters*. Then the aforementioned Kangaroos and the *Cold-Blooded Chameleon Commandos*. Even Marvel had plans to do a Turtles parody. They advertised it on the back cover of *Marvel Age*, even though the title never actually made it out. (Twenty-five *Wizard* style points for whoever can tell us what the title was going to be!) The silliness finally ended with a pretty decent comic entitled *Boris the Bear Slaughters the Teenage Radioactive Black Belt Mutant Ninja Critters*. (Whew!)

As to what your Kangaroo debut is worth—a lot as far as nyuk-nyuk value goes, and about $1.88 American.

Dear Wizard,

My husband and I are already working on costume ideas for this Halloween. I plan on putting five months' work into the most realistic Rogue costume I can create, but my husband is having trouble deciding on a character. He can't find a comic character he would be believable as. He has long blonde hair, a medium build, and is of medium height. Could you give us some suggestions and perhaps print a picture? We'd appreciate it!

Kenda Ronquille-Thomas
Starke, FL

Ah, the family that costumes together stays together. Ain't marital bliss grand?

Your hubby has lots of options. There's Flash Gordon or Flash Thompson. You could try Johnny Blaze or Johnny Storm. There's Archer of *Archer & Armstrong* fame, but he doesn't have much hair. You can try Hawkeye, Quasar, Hank Pym, Aquaman, Speedball, Animal Man, or Green Arrow. Longshot would be cool, and hubby scores extra points for cutting one finger off each hand to get the requisite amount of digits. Ka-Zar would be easy; all he'd need would be a loincloth and a sabertooth tiger. However it goes, be sure to send us a picture—we'd like to see how it turns out.

Dear Wizard,

I would first like to congratulate Image on the success of *Gen*^{13}. It has become my favorite Image comic and one of the best I've read in a while. I just have one question. Was Gen^{13}'s first appearance in *Deathmate Black*? I think it is, but if it's not, could you tell me where it is?

Jeremy Young
Kaimuki, HI

There's two schools of thought on that one. Some would say *Deathmate Black*, because it came out first. Others would say *Gen*^{13} #1, because the whole *Deathmate* storyline "never happened." It's kind of like *What If...?* in Marvel—stories that didn't actually happen in the character's continuity. But the masses have spoken! Experts confirm that *Deathmate Black* is indeed the first Gen^{13} appearance even though *Deathmate* was an "imaginary story." Like comics aren't fake in the first place.

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

Dear Wizard,

I just bought issue #34 of your mag. I think it's Wizardrific!

1) Where the heck did the big penny in the Batcave come from?

2) What does John Byrne eat for breakfast?

3) How much does an opened *Ren & Stimpy* #1 cost?

Thank you.

Aaron Joseph David
Manila, Philippines

First, a smack for Aaron, for using...*that word*. (THWAP!) Now on to the questions.

1) Yow. This one's more complicated than I thought. According to Maureen McTigue of DC Comics, "The big penny first appeared in *World's Finest* #30 in 1947. Young Joe Coyne is plagued by pennies all his life. He turns bad and chooses pennies as his criminal motif. He and his gang commit various penny-related crimes. Batman and Robin make sure they're at a local stamp and coin show where everything is larger than life, including a 1947 Lincoln penny. Coyne tries to steal the penny, Batman and Robin of course foil

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Chris Hartley
Age: 18 Sex: Male
RR #1
Inglewood, Ontario, Canada L0N 1K0
Likes: *Sleepwalker, Venom, Aliens*

Tina S. Alan
Age: 18 Sex: Female
1470 Oakley St.
Bronx, NY 10469
Likes: *Green Lantern: Mosaic, She-Hulk, The Maxx*

Mike Costello
Age: 12 Sex: Male
3349 Greenbriar Dr.
Glenview, IL 60025
Likes: *Spawn, X-Force, Deadpool*

Zach Vick
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2432 Meadows Landing
Chesapeake, VA 23321
Likes: *Spawn, Cyberforce, WildC.A.T.s*

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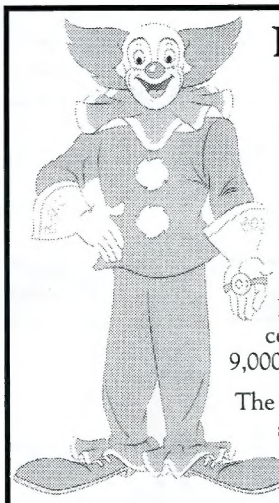

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DEALERS CALL FACTORY DIRECT

the scheme, and Coyne is captured. The big penny is a souvenir from that case.

"But that's in the old continuity. In the current continuity, it's just there. It hasn't been explained yet."

I still want to know how it got in the Batcave. They must have a big slot in the top, like a piggy bank.

2) "A bowl of Total, usually with fresh strawberries, and a cup of decaffeinated tea."

3) As much as you have to pay.

Dear Wizard,

What would happen if Spawn fought the Silver Surfer? I'd like to know because they are my favorite comic book characters, and these are the kinds of things I think about when I'm sitting at home and the power goes out.

Michael Cornett
Fisty, KY

Geez, I don't know. But you might be able to find out in next month's *Wizard*. We'll be running a feature on the top intercompany battles you'll never see. The list is just now being finalized, and a Surfer/Spawn brawl just might break out. No matter who shows up to square off, it's bound to be interesting. Personally, I'm pulling for Paste-Pot Pete vs. the Calculator and *Wizard* Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky vs. *Night Court*'s Roz, Marsha Warfield.

Dear Wizard and Readers,

I came to a realization recently, one some *Wizard* readers apparently should learn. It came to me on Mother's Day after I went to a comic store.

When I got home, right after giving mom her gift and card, I immediately got to reading my comics. I got through a fantastic *Action Comics* #700, read the delightful *Robin* #7, cried at *Marvels* #4, and had lunch. After lunch, I finished the incredible *Thor* #475, enjoyed the awesome *Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey* #1, laughed at the superb *Hulk* #418, smiled at *Ray* #1, marveled at *Green Lantern* #50, and finally finished up with the outstanding *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* while my favorite song played on the radio.

And then it hit me! (If you were wondering if there was a point to all this, wait no longer!) I had just felt that wonderful feeling one gets from reading great books, and it never came from reading an Image book, an Ultraverse book, or a Valiant book. Just Marvel and DC books! I had been pushing myself (and lying to myself) to get myself to like these other books after your constant coverage of them!

Effective immediately, I will stop collecting these companies and limit myself only to the things on the market which I actually enjoy, Marvel and DC comics. I bear no ill will toward Image, Malibu, et cetera; one man's pleasure is another man's poison. If you like bloodthirsty psychos or interchangeable word balloons, go ahead! Enjoy! But if you find yourself buying a comic just because *Wizard* has it in Picks from the Wizard's Hat or if you look at a comic you collect and think to yourself, "Hey, wait a minute—this sucks!" then do as I did: rethink why you are buying this book.

Joseph Needelman-Ruiz
Brooklyn, NY

So in a nutshell, buy what you like. See next letter.

Wizard,

Two subjects:

Japanese animation.

Independent comics and publishers.

So much imagination and talent is pretty much ignored by your front-line publication—so much that I've given up on you guys and scratched you off my list of monthly pick-ups at the comic shop where I do my business.

Nothing personal. You're glitzy, flashy—state of the art. I'm sure millions of collectors will continue to buy you. Hell, shouldn't everyone know as much as possible about Marvel,

DC, and Image and how they flood the market with production-line conformity?

Give me Rebel, London Night, Mulehide, and Fathom!

Give me *Akira*, *Legend of the Overfiend*, and *Genocyber*!

Matthew G.M. Korenkiewicz
Royal Oak, MI

So in a nutshell, buy what you like. That's a lesson we would all do well to learn.

As to what we cover and don't cover, I think we do a pretty good job of remaining balanced. Picks from the Wizard's Hat is not intended to tell you what you absolutely have to buy. It's intended to give you a preview of major upcoming events, to help you decide if you want to buy any of 'em—or not. Hopefully, that section encourages and discourages an equal amount of purchases.

It is only inevitable that DC, Image, and Marvel receive a considerable amount of ink in these pages. They're the big kids on the block. That's what the majority of our audience wants to know about, and you've got to give the people what they want. If this were a car magazine, we'd be writing about General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. For the smaller publishers, we've got things like Palmer's Picks. In any given issue, probably less than 10 percent of our readership actually wants to know about the Palmer's Picks subject, but I think it's the most important thing we do here.

Halloween Costume Contest

All right, this is your final reminder. The third annual *Wizard* Halloween costume contest is just around the corner, and depending on when you're reading this, you still have about a week or so to enter. Before we go into what you can win if you enter (and you'd better enter; we don't run these things for ourselves, y'know), here's a couple of dos and don'ts...

1. What we want you to do is dress up as anything, be it a superhero or a science fiction, horror, or cartoon character—*anything*!

2. The actual costume itself *must* be homemade, but you can add store-bought items to accent it. For example, you can't go out and buy a Batman mask and enter as Batman, but you can get a real surfboard and use it as part of your Silver Surfer costume. *¿Comprende?*

3. Photograph yourself in your costume, write your name, full mailing address, and phone number on a small piece of paper, tape it to the back of your photo (don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints—no Polaroids! We recommend you take multiple shots with multiple poses. Make sure you focus!

4. To be eligible to win, we *must* receive your photo entry by **September 1, 1994.** (That's, like, tomorrow, so get your butt in gear, soldier!)

5. Enclose documented proof of your weight (letter from doctor,/ school nurse, etc.). If you already sent us an entry and didn't include this proof, please mail it separately, with your name, address, and the name of the character you portrayed, to the address below. Please write "WEIGHT PROOF" clearly in the left-hand corner of your envelope. So why do we need your weight? Read below.

FLAMING CARROT™ & © BOB BURDEN

Send your entry to:
Costume Contest III
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

The best entries will see print in the pages of *Wizard* #40, on sale in late October.

So...what the hell do you get for dressing up like an idiot and having your picture seen by everybody? For starters, the grand prize winner receives his or her body weight in candy (and good candy at that—no crappy stuff). Runners-up will receive autographed comics, trading card sets, model kits, and all sorts of other neat stuff.

Last year's third place winner, Jeffrey Jones of Houston, Texas, in his Flaming Carrot outfit. Ut, ut!

Dear Wizard,

I went to see *The Crow* on opening day and I just wanted to tell everyone how good it was. A very long time ago, I acquired the Caliber Press comics, and they soon became my prized possessions. I tried to get people interested in what I think is the best storyline I've ever read, but no one really got into it except me.

I heard about Brandon Lee's death on *The Crow* set and was heartbroken because I thought that the movie wouldn't be released. Fortunately, I was wrong. So I was there to see a legend in the making (a decent comic movie—not some Marvel screw-up!) and a major stepping stone for the independent comic industry. I was still a bit apprehensive going in when I learned the plot was not the same as it was in the comics. Still, I recognized lines and even images from the actual comic incorporated into the movie. I was practically in tears. The story was told very well, changes or not. But I still have questions that I hope *Wizard* can answer.

1) I had always believed that Eric was brain damaged. Was he still alive, in a brain-damaged state, or brought back from the dead to get vengeance?

2) Why did the movie change the plot? James O'Barr had a completely different gang run into Shelly and Eric in the comic.

3) Is the movie character Sarah a spin-off of the comic character Sherri? It seems like it, since Eric gave both girls Shelly's ring.

Thanks a lot!

Cassie Horlon
Austin, TX

1) In the comic, my take is neither. It was never explicitly stated that Eric had died, but I think he was dead in the physical sense. He said, however, "It's not death if you refuse it." I think he was physically dead, but the Crow kept his body animated long enough to get revenge.

2) Because it's hard to make a direct translation.

3) Sherri in the comic equals Sarah in the movie.

Dear Wizard,

I am a total fan of James O'Barr's comic book and movie *The Crow*.

Recently, I have watched TV shows and

Matt Forté
Age: 21 Sex: Male
15838 Dell View Rd.
El Cajon, CA 92021-2659
Likes: X-titles, Image titles, *Spirits of Vengeance*

Taylor Peterson
Age: 13 Sex: Male
1428 Nipomo St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Likes: *Savage Dragon*, *Youngblood*, *Prime*

Jessye Lim
Age: 16 Sex: Female
304 Orchid Rd. #02-06
Singapore 0923
Likes: *Spawn*, X-titles, *WildC.A.T.s*

Mark Warren
Age: 14 Sex: Male
305 Cliff Howard Dr.
Warner Robins, GA 31088
Likes: All Spider-Man titles, Image titles, X-titles

Michael Warren
Age: 11 Sex: Male
305 Cliff Howard Dr.
Warner Robins, GA 31088
Likes: All X-titles, all Image titles, *Venom*

Jeff Roché
Age: 16 Sex: Male
2813 N. Turnbull Dr.
Metairie, LA 70002
Likes: X-titles, *The Maxx*, *Harbinger*

Stephanie Kibble
Age: 7 Sex: Female
539 Chard Ct.
Grayslake, IL 60030
Likes: *Ren & Stimpy*, *Uncanny X-Men*, *Punisher War Journal*

Juan W. Velasquez
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Ask the WIZARD

Q: If I pour water onto pure potassium, what reaction will occur?
—G. Roore, Fairfield, CT
A: *A sizable explosion would occur.*

Q: Since the FF's Thing has no lips, can he use a straw, or even whistle?
—M. Teeni, San Diego, CA
A: *Doesn't seem likely.*

Q: Does Aquaman need to wear sunglasses after he comes up from the ocean floor to the surface?
—O. Juarez, Tempe, AZ
A: *Nope. Since he's one of them pesky half-breed types, his body can adjust to both land and deep-sea surroundings fairly quickly.*

Q: Is Mantra a lesbian?
—H. Simpson, Somerset, KY
A: *Does it matter?*

WIZARD wonders...

How does Daredevil know when he's done wiping his butt?

Ask the Pros

Hey, Art Adams...
"When is *Monkeyman and O'Brien* coming out?"
—G. Kin, Portland, OR

PHOTO: J. SCHOMER

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

read newspaper and magazine articles about how the movie was completed after the death of its star.

But I have not read one word on who put the fatal bullet in the gun that killed Brandon Lee. No word on an investigation or anything of the like.

Come on, guys—how can this be called an accident? Somebody must be in charge of props. Bullets don't magically appear in the barrels of guns. This is the real world. My opinion is that somebody is responsible and somebody should be held accountable.

Robert Valentine
New York, NY

OK, here's what we, and the general public, know: on March 31 of last year, Michael Massee, who played the villain Funboy, was supposed to shoot Lee with a blank during the filming of a flashback sequence. His prop gun fired a .44-caliber bullet instead, which struck Lee in the abdomen. Lee died after 12 hours of emergency surgery.

As far as we know, this case has not gone to trial; it was officially determined that Lee's shooting was, in fact, an accident. We'll keep you readers apprised of any new developments.

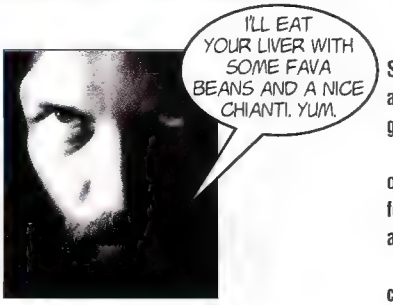

PHOTO: MITCH JENKINS

Dear Wizard Guy,

How about telling whoever handles the Top 10 Hottest Artists and Writers section to get a new picture of Alan Moore? He looks like the lead singer of Metallica in the photo you guys always use.

Jeff Walker
Ellicott City, MD

The photo we use comes off the back of the *Watchmen* trade paperback. It's tough to get Alan Moore photos, because for some strange reason he usually doesn't show up on film. Hmmm—kinda makes you wonder.

While James Hetfield is regarded as a rather talented guitarist and singer for Metallica, Alan Moore is one up on him. After all, he sings *and* drives the Winnebago for the Good Old Boys.

Dear Guide to Comics,

Are there left-handed pencilers and inkers in the comic book industry?

Brendan J. Farrell
Sacramento, CA

There are left-handers just as there are left-wingers, left fielders, leftovers, and those who are left out. A few examples of southpaw artists are Todd McFarlane (of *Spawn* fame), Mark Bagley (of *Amazing Spider-Man*), and Larry Stroman (formerly of *X-Factor*). And hey—writers can be lefties, too. Fabian Nicieza, who writes lots of stuff, is a portsider.

From Sammy to Spider-Man,

I'm your biggest fan and you are my friend. I like you a lot. I wish you to write back and send me a Spider-Man picture of you. You are a good Spider-Man. I like Spider-Man. Can you write back to me? Thank you for listening to me.

Sammy Chadwick
Dover, TN

Sammy, we got in touch with Spider-Man for you and he was happy to see your letter. He said thanks for being a fan, and he's happy to be your friend, too. He's been kind of busy these days, so we weren't able to get a picture, but we told Stan Lee, the guy who wrote the first Spider-Man story ever, about your letter. Stan will be sending an autographed picture your way.

Dear Wizard,

If adamantium can slice through anything but nothing can slice through adamantium, can adamantium slice through adamantium?

Jason Strutz
Buffalo, NY

Sometimes I think I should be that guy sitting at the top of the mountain answering all those great ponderables.

This one's up there with "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" and "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make any sound?" It's a doozy. But I'll try.

It depends on the edge. A metal hacksaw can cut metal if it's got a sharp-enough edge and enough force is behind it. So yes, you can cut adamantium with sharper adamantium.

CYCLOPS ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Dear Wizard,

Does Cyclops leave his glasses on when he's in the bath or does he just blow the whole tub away?

Ben DeLuca
San Diego, CA

He wears those Kareem Abdul-Jabbar goggles when he's in the tub.

Dear Wizard,

In the back of *Nexus* #6, there is a fan art section in which a handsome picture of Nexus is drawn by a Matt Wagner. Is this the same Matt Wagner who created Grendel and Mage

Coming to CBS
September 17, 1994

BE THERE

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HEY! Andy Kim!
We have your name but not your address! Send us your address along with your full name and phone number so we can send you the stuff you won! And hey, awesome envelopes!

Mephiles, Beelzebub, and John Constantine TM & © DC Comics. (The other guy's confederate blue demons.)

Bob Giordano
Nashville, TN

and now writes *Sandman Mystery Theatre*?

Robert Syrett
Menlo Park, CA

You're darned tootin' it is. Once again, fan art contests have proven to be the stairway to fame and fortune. Kinda makes you want to send something to The Drawing Board, huh?

Dear Wizard,

Why did Image transfer *Trencher* to a different comic company?

Anthony Caminitti
Elgin, IL

After a four-issue run under the Image imprint, *Trencher* was one of several titles axed by Image because it didn't fit in with the rest of their superhero titles. One issue, the *Trencher X-mas Bites Holiday Special*, was published by Blackball Comics. The title is now in limbo.

Dear Wizard,

How many licks does it take to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop?

Bud Zedi
Bethesda, MD

I already told you, hot dammit! Three!

Dear Wizard,

Will Batman meet Spawn again?

Carlos Avila
Commerce, CA

Oh, please, no.

Dear Wizard,

Can we have your liver?

Karl Stevens
Gardner, MA

I don't know if you'd want it. Personally, mine is about the size of a football.

Dear Wizard,

Send me one of everything.

Scott Engley
Edmonton,
Alberta, Canada

You want fries with that?

Well, that's all, folks. I now leave you to the tender mercies of the rest of the magazine. Let's be careful out there. Until next month, I'll see you in the funny pages.

Jim McLauchlin is the news editor and all-around nice guy on our companion publication, Collector's Sportslook. *He is the only one on staff there who gives a rip about* Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos.

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RAGS SELLOW

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Third Prize (200 winners)

A spiffy Tekno•Comix T-shirt!

Fourth Prize (500 winners)

A limited edition Tekno•Comix print!

Mr. Hero-The Newmatic Man, *Primortals*, *Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe* and Tekno•Comix are trademarks of BIG Entertainment Inc.

Everybody's so excited, they've lined up to get their copy of *Wizard* to enter!

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BIG ENTERTAINMENT INC. THANKS A BUNCH, GUYS!

SO HOW DO YOU ENTER THIS KICKIN' CONTEST? IT'S EASY. JUST FILL OUT THE COUPON BELOW, ATTACH A PHOTOCOPY OF A DOCUMENT PROVING THAT EITHER YOU OR THE PERSON WHO WILL ATTEND THE TRIP WITH YOU IS 18 OR OLDER, STUFF IT ALL IN AN ENVELOPE, SLAP A STAMP ON IT AND SHIP IT OFF TO:

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and BIG Entertainment, their immediate families, and anybody who spells Tekno with "ch". Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard, have a friend fill out the same information, and staple a photocopy of a birth certificate, driver's license, or other document proving either your age or your friend's age to the form. To be eligible to win the Grand Prize, the contestant or the contestant's friend must be 18 years old or older, and must provide proof of age. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Tekno•Comix Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. If rabbit feet are so lucky, how come those poor rabbits (who have four rabbit feet) get snared and have one of their legs lopped off to make a good luck charm? Hmm? Answer me, damn it! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on October 3, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners, available after October 21, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Tekno•Comix Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

WINNERS

Congratulations to the winners of *Wizard* #34's Mars Attacks Contest!

Answers: #1, England; **#2**, Ants; **#3**, In Earth's orbit.

Grand Prize

Richard Hengen (age 15)
Philadelphia, PA

Second Prize

Wade Winnard (age 14) Bethany, OK

Third Prize

Kevin Allen (age 8) Graham, NC
John Bequette (age 12) Rancho Cordova, CA
Jim McConnell (age 14) South Waverly, PA
Kathleen Pearlman Verona, NJ
Auzim Sultan (age 21) Murrysville, PA
Tim Valus (age 25) Cleveland, OH

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Mars Attacks Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064 for a complete list of winners.

Tekno•Comix Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Better move it! The deadline's September 30, 1994!

If you're late, you stay at home in your room!

OUT OF ALL THE ENTRIES WE RECEIVE, WE'LL SHOVE 'EM ALL IN A HUGE BOX (OR SOMETHING) AND RANDOMLY PULL OUT ALL THE WINNERS!

CONTEST

Official Tekno•Comix Coupon

I am:

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PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

My friend is:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) AGE

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

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MANOWAR
WARRIOR-KING
OF THE LOST LAND!
A SAVAGE TALE OF UNTOLD BATTLES AND REVENGE...
UNITY: THE LOST CHAPTER...
Kevin VanHook • Michael Bair
VALIANT

WIZARD NEWS

JUBILEE ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Has Marvel handed Jubilee and the other X-Men their walking papers? "I'm starting school this fall, and they want to cancel that, too?"

X-MEN CANCELED?

A major rumor circulating through comic circles says **Marvel Comics** plans to cancel some or all of its **X-Men** related titles. Suspiciously, Marvel's publicity manager, **Gary Guzzo**, would not comment as to the truth of this and other rumors regarding Marvel's merry mutants.

This, coupled with the rumor that Marvel has given its superstar X-artists, such as **Andy Kubert**, **Adam Kubert**, **Joe Madureira**, and **Chris Bachalo**, some time off ("Again, no comment," says Guzzo), makes one wonder whether or not the titles—which include ***Uncanny X-Men***, ***X-Men***, ***Generation X***, ***X-Force***, ***X-Factor***, ***Excalibur***, ***Wolverine***, and ***Cable***—will indeed be expunged from the mutant corner of the Marvel Universe. Perhaps they will undergo major overhauls, or evolve into something else entirely.

Are major characters going to perish as a part of this supposed cancellation? Guzzo, standing his ground, says he will neither confirm nor deny anything. X-Fans, of course, know there's always current vegetable **Magneto** who could return at any month's notice, or will something more...sinister happen?

Since the X-titles are consistently Top 10 best-selling books on major distributors' lists, true believers have to wonder why the rumored cancellation of the books would be necessary. Whatever Marvel has in mind, if anything, it will be interesting to see how things pan out; that is, if X-Fans can stand the wait to know the truth. *Wizard* will keep readers posted as more information comes trickling in.

Pérez Goes to IMAGE

After hinting in *Wizard* #36 that his creator-owned ***Gladiator*** series might be published through either Malibu's **Bravura** imprint or under the **Image Comics** banner, fan-favorite writer/artist **George Pérez** signed with Image.

Pérez won't say much about the contents of *Gladiator*, and with good reason: It probably won't be hitting the comics shops until late 1995. He doesn't want to raise expectations too soon.

He admits that commercial considerations tipped the scales in Image's favor. "Although I love working with Malibu [on *UltraForce*], it's inescapable that the audience for Bravura titles 'skews old,'" Pérez explains. "Longtime fans [of mine] will pick up my work no matter where it's published, but going to Image will mean bringing in new readers.

"To stay cutting edge, I must develop a new fan following and broaden the base of my fan support," he sums up.

Pérez *will* say *Gladiator* won't be part of Image's continuity. "It's the first parallel-universe character at Image," he chuckles.

He says *Gladiator* "will not be solicited until all 12 issues of the self-contained mini-series are completed." He begins work on the series in August and expects to complete it within 12 months, for a late '95 release.

However, he continues to pencil *UltraForce* for Malibu, and will pencil a one-shot *Dollar Comics Summer Special*, featuring the Dollar Comics characters from *John Byrne's Next Men*. Written by John Byrne, that book comes from Dark Horse Comics sometime soon.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

"I'm just gonna eat that Big Cheese all up. Mmmmm-mmmm!"

TM & © SEGA OF AMERICA

"Are you talking to me? Am I the only one standing here? Do I amuse you? Cos I'm the only one standing here. Are you talking to me?"

"My dad took me on a fishing trip and I caught a fish this big, and this big, and this big!"

PHOTOS: AL ORTEGA

A Really BIG Deal

Kicking off its comic book universe in November, BIG Entertainment's **Tekno•Comix** lays its titles on a solid backbone.

Tekno's first title, **Leonard Nimoy's *Primortals***, poses the question: what if Earth gained absolute scientific proof that beings from another world were on the way; how would this impact upon the people of Earth, particularly if we didn't know their intentions? Nimoy supervises a creative team of writer Kate Worley, penciler Scott Eaton, and inker Mike Barreiro. Chris Warner designed the characters.

The company's second title, **Neil Gaiman's *Mr. Hero–the Newmatic Man***, by Jim Vance, Ted Slampyak, and Bob McLeod comes out in November. This book features an evil entity called the Teknophage. Devoted to conquering all the worlds in the universe, the being creates automatons to do his dirty work. Only an automaton of Teknophage's own creation can stop it—a coal-powered, cast-iron robot known as Mr. Hero, The Newmatic Man, hidden on Earth in preparation for a future invasion. Teknophage learns of Mr. Hero's existence and seeks to terminate him.

Incidentally, Teknophage will spin off into its own book in early '95. Rick Veitch will write it, and an artist has yet to be named.

December sees the late **Gene Roddenberry's *Lost Universe***. His last known work, this book has Earth recovering from a devastating, 1,000-year war with a vastly powerful alien race, which led to the scattering of humanity across the galaxy, isolated from each other. The story has humans trying to reunify. D.C. Fontana and Roddenberry's widow Majel Barrett wrote the story based on Roddenberry's concept.

Tekno•Comix present Neil Gaiman's Mr. Hero–the Newmatic Man *in November.*

Mr. Hero–the Newmatic Man™ & © Neil Gaiman

Mickey Spillane's *Mike Danger*, officially launched as a Sunday newspaper strip in the *Asbury Park Press* in September (by Max Allan Collins, Keith Giffen, and Mike Barreiro), gains its own monthly book in early '95. This story traps a hard-boiled detective in a future society. No creative team has been set.

Still in their formative stages, Tekno will announce other concepts by **Isaac Asimov**, **John Jakes**, **Anne McCaffrey**, and **Robert Silverberg** as they get ready for release.

GROO Wanders from EPIC to IMAGE

Better price. Better paper. Better color. Same old jokes.

"If you didn't like *Groo* before," intones **Mark Evanier**, whose role in the production of *Groo* has never been satisfactorily explained, "you won't like it now."

After 120 monthly issues from Marvel/Epic, the run of *Groo The Wanderer* ends in November. In December, ***Sergio Aragonés' Groo* #1** ships from Image, and will continue monthly as before. The page count remains the same, but the price drops from $2.25 to $1.95. Plus, the paper stock and color separation (by In Color, under the watchful eye of Tom Luth) will be improved.

Asked about the reasons behind the change, Evanier stated that the split with Marvel was amicable. "We'd been there for 10 years, and hadn't managed to sink their boat. It just seemed like it was time to move on." Several publishers expressed interest in taking *Groo* in, including all six remaining Image founders. *Groo* will come out under the Image imprint, but not as part of any single founder's studio.

When asked about Image's interest in signing Aragonés, Evanier replied, "*Groo* was in the first wave of creator-owned comics, and Image's founders are part of the new wave of creator ownership of titles. It's a very comfortable fit. When *Groo* started, common wisdom was that creator-owned books would never work. Well, *Groo* has never missed a deadline in ten years, never had a fill-in issue or a guest artist, and never short-cut its contents in any way."

The *Groo* compilation volumes will now also be published by Image, beginning with the eighth in the series, *The Groo Houndbook*. A *Groo Encyclopedia* ("Everything you never wanted to know about Groo," Evanier quips) is also in the works.

—Paul J. Grant

Groo™ & © Sergio Aragonés

JIM LEE Takes Sabbatical

After seven years of drawing comic books, Image Comics founder and creator **Jim Lee** announced that he is planning on taking some time off for an indefinite period of time following September's ***WildC.A.T.s* #13**.

"The sabbatical was a promise I made to my wife two years ago when we had our first child, so I could help out more at home," says Lee, who has a second child due in the fall. "When I do come back, I hope to be able to redefine my look and my work with a major new project; one which I will write, pencil, and ink."

Lee is being secretive about his specific future plans, but says "it will be nice to have the opportunity to regroup, to rethink my style and approach to comic books."

While Lee will have no artistic role during his sabbatical, he will remain as a consultant on all of his WildStorm Productions books, working closely with **Whilce Portacio**, **Brandon Choi**, **J. Scott Campbell**, and **Brett Booth**.

Lee does plan on attending a few of the summer conventions to yap about his upcoming WildC.A.T.s animated series debuting in September. He assures readers that he is not taking the time off to devote extra attention to the cartoon series, as one might suspect.

Taking over for Lee, in the meantime, on the penciling of the monthly *WildC.A.T.s* will be **Travis Charest** (*WildC.A.T.s Special* #1), beginning with October's #14. Storywise, **James Robinson** (*The Golden Age*, *Firearm*) will write #14 and #15.

In Memoriam: ALFRED HARVEY, 1913-1994

He created Richie Rich, and he made Casper the Friendly Ghost famous, but most comics fans probably don't know his name, save as the corporate name for a small comics publisher. **Alfred Harvey**, who died July 4 at the age of 80 from heart failure, was one of the pioneers of the comics industry.

Born Alfred Harvey Wiernikoff and raised in Brooklyn, he began his professional career at 15 drawing advertising cartoons to support his family during the Depression. After a brief stint at Fox Comics, he began his own company in 1940, creating, writing, and drawing many of the early characters himself. These included a female hero—the Black Cat—who beat Wonder Woman to print by several months. Harvey Comics also acquired rights to characters from other media, including the Green Hornet and Dick Tracy.

In the 1950s, Harvey Comics worked closely with creators Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, who produced *Boys Ranch* and *Fighting American* there. During this period, Harvey began working with George Baker on the character Sad Sack. At one time, Harvey published up to 12 monthly Sad Sack titles.

In 1957 Harvey became the company most fans recognize today with the purchase of the characters and film library of Paramount Famous Studios cartoons, including Casper. The company took the cartoons to TV, as "Funday Funnies," initiating the company's current logo, a multi-colored jack-in-the-box.

By the 1960s, Alfred Harvey expanded the line by creating new characters—with Richie Rich, Little Hot Stuff, and Wendy the Good Little Witch among them. At one time in the 1970s, Richie Rich appeared in more titles simultaneously than any other comics character. But by the late 1980s, sales of Harvey comics were almost non-existent. The family sold the rights to the cartoon properties to a group of investors headed by Jeffrey Montgomery. That company, Harvey Entertainment, now publishes through an arrangement with Marvel Comics.

Alfred Harvey retained rights to the Black Cat, Sad Sack and several other characters, publishing reprints through the Lorne-Harvey imprint. A Black Cat movie is reportedly in pre-production.

Alfred Harvey is survived by four sons, a daughter, and three grandchildren.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

PHOTO: FABIAN BACHRACH

Alfred Harvey, 1913-1994

What's Up WITH... *Fartman*?

The first comic based on Howard Stern's character, Fartman, is on indefinite hold. *Fartman* was going to be published by Hart D. Fisher's Boneyard Press but was pulled because Stern's people "were worried about the violence after seeing [Boneyard's] *Howard Stern vs. Rush Limbaugh*." The project may still come together for Fisher since "the ink was about to flow" before the plug was pulled. No comment was available from Stern's manager, Dan Buchwald.

—William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert

COMPANY UPDATES

ARCHIE COMICS
In October, the *Sonic the Hedgehog In Your Face! Special* #1 sets up December's *Princess Sally* mini-series.

BONEYARD PRESS
In November, learn all of O.J. Simpson's prison survival tips in *Doin' Time with O.J.* This book will include cameos by Mike Tyson, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Tupac Shakur...October will see the "director's cut" of *Razor vs. Dark Angel: The Final Nail*, where one character will die at story's end.

BONGO COMICS
The *Simpsons Comics Extravaganza* trade paperback, shipping in October, collects *Simpsons Comics* #1-#4.

CARTOON BOOKS
Gran'ma Ben, Thorn, and Fone Bone are forced to hide in the forest from the evil Rat Creatures in *Bone* #16, shipping in October.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Matt Wagner's Grendel-Prime backup tales in *Grendel Tales* will eventually lead into 1995's *Batman/Grendel II*. The backups will be collected into a single book preceding the crossover mini-series...Dark Horse Comics will produce a new, as-yet-untitled Mask comic book based on the upcoming Saturday morning cartoon...Chris Warner returns to draw X in *X* #10-#12; Warner drew his book in last summer's *Comics' Greatest World* kickoff mini-series...November debuts *The Machine* monthly series, by writer John Arcudi and artist Ted Naifeh...Coming in January is the four-issue *Nexus vs. Vortex* by Mike Baron and Joe Comstock, where Nexus travels to the CGW universe, to bring justice to the mass murderer alien from the Vortex...The Flaming Carrot returns to comics after a brief hiatus in his 31st issue by Bob Burden, shipping in October.

DC COMICS
Nightwing fans will rejoice this September, when Dick Grayson puts on the Batman costume for a four-part storyline. Bruce Wayne decides to turn over the Bat-role to someone else again, but this time he gives it to a man he can trust, the man he trained as Robin for years. In this storyline, which runs through *Batman* #512, *Detective* #679, *Robin* #11, and *Shadow of the Bat* #32, the new Batman teams up with Robin against Two-Face, who plans to destroy Gotham City's judicial system. After this story arc, Mr. Wayne will once again don the Bat-duds...Keep on the lookout for an awesome poster painted by Alex Ross which depicts all of DC's big gun characters. Another cool offering is Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal's new Green Lantern vs. old GL Hal Jordan poster. Look for both in October.

DEFIANT
In the aftermath of *Schism*, the Org in November's *Warriors of Plasm* #15 is more brutal than ever. Now Lorca and crew must contend with Ulnareah once again, in a story by David Lapham.

EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS
Displaying great artwork by Oliver Isabedra is November's *Aster* by Express's Entity Comics imprint. Aster's purpose is to seek out worlds unfit to survive and destroy them. *Aster* #1 has a cover by Jae Lee (*Hellshock*)...You've seen them in *Zen, Intergalactic Ninja*; now check out September's four-issue *Manosaurs* mini-series.

IMAGE COMICS
Brandon Peterson is leaving *Codename: Stryke Force* in late '94 to draw the new *Ripclaw* series starting in early '95...Art Thibert's *Black & White* series starts in October.

MALIBU COMICS
Former *Ghost Rider* artist Javier Saltares will be returning to the horror genre by drawing *Rune* #7-#9...October's *Ultra-Force* #2 reveals the origin of Atalon, as Prime leaves the group...Julie Bell is paint-

continues on page 27

ELLISON Joins Silver Moon

At July's Chicago Comic Con, **Silver Moon Comics** Publisher Deni Loubert announced that author **Harlan Ellison** will develop Silver Moon's first comic book series, *The Drop Dead Comedians*. Part of a planned three-title line of books, *Comedians* will debut in July 1995, with plotting by Ellison and scripts by Jan Strnad.

A nationwide talent search for the *Comedians* artist commenced in Chicago and continued at early August's San Diego Comic Con. When Silver Moon and Ellison determine which artist they select, we'll announce it here.

HOLY BEJEEZUS!

Our Scavenger Hunt from *Wizard* #32 generated so many responses (over 3,000! Holy guacamole!) that we must postpone announcing the winners until issue #39. We apologize for any inconvenience, and thank you for your patience.

Spider-Man/Venom: Maximum Carnage

by Acclaim for Super Nintendo
Expect to Pay: $55-$65, available in mid-September

TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group

A Black Cat always lands on her feet.

STEVE'S SIX-MONTH USED-GAME FORECAST:

Bright & Sunny. Despite a large print run, most owners will hold on to this cart. High demand will keep used prices at $40–$50.

Spidey has to team up with Venom to stop Carnage. In the early stages, you are Spider-Man, armed with only your superstrength and web-shooters. Typical of these licensed adventures, it is a side-scrolling, beat 'em up, and defeat the boss affair. As you progress through the 24 levels, you assume the identity of Venom and get help from no less than seven super-pals: The Black Cat, Cloak, Dagger, Deathlok, Iron Fist, Firestar, and Captain America.

WIZARD'S POWER UP FIVE-STAR RATING SYSTEM

REPLAY VALUE: 3 (of 5)

A very fast-paced game suffering from the same flaw most side-scrollers do: too many lowly foes to wade through before you get to Carnage and his cronies. Fans of this type of game will be very impressed by the seamless moves and options.

GRAPHICS & SOUND: 5

The soundtrack by Green "your 15 minutes are up" Jelly truly rocks. The wonderful animation captures the essence of the comic storyline. *Maximum Carnage* gets my vote for the best-looking game of the year.

COMPLEXITY: 4

The absence of a save feature really hurts this type of game. It's just too much to ask the average gamer to blow through 24 levels in one sitting. On the other hand, you can build up "continues" through game play. The basic concept is straightforward, and with power-ups and move mastery, the advanced gamer will have a ball.

PLAYABILITY: 5

Special combat moves and web-shooter operation are fairly simple, making for an enjoyable slugfest. The varied settings and intense visuals make this the crown jewel of all Spider-Man video games.

OVERALL RATING: 4

Worth the dough.

COMPARABLE CLOSET CLASSIC

Atari 2600 *Spider-Man* (1981) Current value: $8-$12

Parker Brothers really delivered with the first Marvel-licensed video game. Hard to believe it was an Atari game. Well worth tracking down, and it could become a sought-after collectible.

The Incredible Hulk

by U.S. Gold for Sega Genesis
Expect to Pay: $50-$55, available now

STEVE'S SIX-MONTH USED-GAME FORECAST:

Overcast. This game will not be heavily ordered or produced, but the amount of copies turned in to your local used video game store will result in a $35-$40 item.

You fight through five levels, each with its own boss: Abomination, Rhino, Tyrannus, Absorbing Man, and the Leader. Hulk can jump, and punch anything with two legs. As an added plus, he can go through hidden "Warp Zones" located throughout the game. He meets up with various level menaces: robots, cement mixer men, deadly Romans, lizards, slugs, and hover guns.

WIZARD'S POWER UP FIVE-STAR RATING SYSTEM

REPLAY VALUE: 2 (of 5)

Poor. Hulk is the strongest creature on the planet. Why do I find myself running away from scrawny generic robots and non-Union guys shooting balls of cement at me? There are, however, three "continues" hidden throughout.

GRAPHICS & SOUND: 4

The game designers spent most of their time on this and it shows. Hulk is a good-sized and detailed figure. The sound is unassuming until the Hulk issues his beast-like roar.

COMPLEXITY: 5

Just your average duck-and-punch side-scroller. The Hulk's limited movement makes avoiding even minor bad guys nearly impossible, which is ultimately frustrating.

PLAYABILITY: 2

If I wanted to play as a vulnerable character, I'd just stick a Mario clone in my system. Hulk has the capability of mass destruction; this game illustrates that by allowing him to pick up and throw—a phone booth?! Hardly Hulk-like.

OVERALL RATING: 2

Superweak plotline and concept that did little to utilize the Hulk license. Pick it up used when the Game Genie version comes out.

COMPARABLE CLOSET CLASSIC

NES *Super Mario Brothers* (1987)
Current value: $9

This is the blockbuster that rejuvenated the home video game market. Nearly identical to *Hulk* in game concept. If it wasn't for *Hulk*'s graphics, I would rather play *Mario Brothers*.

—Steve Brown

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SHADOW Party a SUCCESS

To celebrate the opening of Universal's ***The Shadow***, director Russell Mulcahy's new art deco version of the 1930's pulp and radio hero's adventures, an opening party was held at hot Washington, D.C. night spot Club Zei. Rachelina Bonacci of Club Zei, Joel Williams of Maryland-based comics specialty shop Heroes Inc. and *Wizard* organized the June 30th event. Co-sponsors included **Topps**, producers of the Shadow trading card set, and **Dark Horse Comics**, current publishers of *Shadow* comic books.

Although *The Shadow*'s leading man **Alec Baldwin** could not attend the D.C. gala, several people associated with the film's production came early, devoured the buffet, and left. However, the lack of movie celebrities didn't dampen the spirits of those in attendance. Spotted among the well-dressed crowd were American Film Institute members and a good number of staffers from the World Cup Soccer Organization. On the upper level of the club, people schmoozed among themselves. One level down, more active celebrants danced under the swirling spotlights, surrounded by the output of several fog machines.

Heroes Inc. set up an attractive *Shadow* display featuring posters and stills from the film, the Topps trading cards and copies of the Dark Horse comic books. Attracted by the colorful and well-designed display, partygoers helped themselves to trading cards as a souvenir of the event.

—Ken Roseman

continued from page 25

ing a cover for *The Strangers* trade paperback collecting issues #1-#4...Howard Chaykin's *Power & Glory* mini-series for Bravura will be collected in a trade paperback in October...In October, Rock-It Comix's offering is *Black Sabbath*.

MARVEL COMICS

Daredevil's team of D.G. Chichester, Scott McDaniel, and Hector Collazo has taken a five-issue hiatus from *DD* (#333-#337) to do the upcoming *Elektra* mini-series.

TOPPS COMICS

Topps will be doing an ongoing series and a three-issue mini-series based on the animated *Duckman* TV series starting in October. Both series will be written by Stefan Petrucha, while the artist on the mini-series will be Jay Lynch, with an undetermined artist for the regular series...Also in November is the comic adaptation of the Francis Ford Coppola and Kenneth Branagh film *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. This four-issue mini-series will be written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Rafael Kayanan, the duo that does Marvel's *Conan the Adventurer*...Joe Linsner (*Cry For Dawn*) will be painting the covers to the three-ish *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs: The Wild Ones* mini-series, starting in September.

VALIANT

In October, *Unity: The Lost Chapters* #1 tells the tale of what happened to X-O Manowar after he got chomped on by a T-Rex in the "Unity" storyline...October's *Harbinger Files* #2 debuts The Harbinger, Harada's "ultimate weapon" with unstoppable powers.

WARP GRAPHICS

Two new titles start in November: *Jink* and *The Rebels*. *Jink*, written by John Ostrander (*The Spectre*), is the descendant of one of *Elfquest*'s popular characters (they ain't tellin' who), and may be the last surviving elf on the World of Two Moons. *The Rebels* is about just that—a young gang running about on the world of *Elfquest*...Everything you've ever wanted to know and more about Elfquest can be found in the 352-page hardcover *Big Elfquest Gatherum* coming in November. This volume features all-new material and is the ultimate reference book for new readers, with a price of $19.95.

"BAD GUYS" Winners Announced

Defiant has announced the winners of the **Bad Guys** contest, through which two lucky participants—one fan and one retailer—will receive $1,000 and the opportunity to have themselves killed in a future issue of ***The Good Guys***. The contest, which was co-promoted with *Wizard* and *Entertainment Retailing*, gave entrants a chance to give themselves an evil power. The "Bad Guys" who were judged to have the best entries were fan Dina Gamboni of Short Hills, N.J., and retailer John Such, owner of Papa John's Comics in Greenville, S.C. Congratulations!

STAR WARS Month in October

Topps and **Dark Horse Comics** have announced a cross-promotion involving the immensely popular **Star Wars** licenses. Many exciting *Star Wars* projects will be available in October (which will be known internationally as "Star Wars Month" for all licensees), including *Star Wars Galaxy Magazine* #1, the *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi: Dark Lords of the Sith* mini-series, a preview of an all-new Topps *Star Wars* trading card series, three Topps *Star Wars: Dark Empire II* trading cards, and a reprint of the *Classic Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* movie adaptation previously published by Marvel Comics. In addition to cross-promotion advertising, posters and trading cards, the two companies will co-host "*Star Wars* Fan Day" during the 25th annual San Diego Comic Con in August.

Star Wars Galaxy Magazine will be a new quarterly magazine that will cover every aspect of the *Star Wars* phenomenon, including Dark Horse's comics. While a mass-market version of *Star Wars Galaxy Magazine* #1—sporting a Ken Steacy cover—will be available nationally, Topps will also produce an exclusive deluxe collector's version for the direct market. Topps has also produced coupons for readers to fill out and give to their local retailers to place *Star Wars Galaxy* on reserve for them. (Wake up, publishers: this ain't a bad idea!)

In November, Topps follows up with the 132-page *Art of Star Wars Galaxy* Vol. II trade paperback, which reprints artwork from the hit trading card set. Look for the cover painted by Boris Vallejo.

Comic Art Exhibitions

Words & Pictures Museum in Northampton, Mass., began exhibiting artwork from Kitchen Sink's *Melting Pot* comic by Kevin Eastman and Simon Bisley on July 11. The show runs through September 11. On August 20, the winner of *Wizard* and Kitchen Sink's Melting Pot Contest Todd Shkolnik of Columbus, Ohio received his prize: Eastman's 1969 Camaro with a hood hand-painted by Bisley. For information on the exhibit, call (413) 586-8545.

An exhibit of The Sandman Gallery starts on September 8 at New York City's Four Color Images. The show features original artwork from Vertigo's forthcoming *Sandman: A Gallery of Dreams* pinup book. Contributors include Dave McKean, Brian Bolland, Jeff Smith, Mike Mignola, Kelley Jones, and more. The show concludes October 22. For more information, call (212) 431-4234.

CHANG Says Stay in School

Fan-favorite penciller **Bernard Chang**, penciler of Valiant's *The Second Life of Doctor Mirage* and *Chaos Effect Alpha* and *Omega*, is entering his fifth and final year as an architecture major at **Pratt Institute** in Brooklyn, N.Y. He has announced plans to take a hiatus from his duties at Valiant during the fall semester. Chang explained, "I'm in the fifth year of a five-year program. The fall semester of the fifth year is usually the toughest semester, with spring being much easier. I'll only be taking two classes in the spring, which means that I'll only be going to school a couple of days a week." Chang is scheduled to take 18 credits during the fall semester, which is about the average class load he's maintained while working at Valiant the past two years.

The Second Life of Bernard Chang.

Chang finished off his summer by penciling *Chaos Effect Omega*, and by ending his run on *The Second Life of Doctor Mirage*. "I'll be finishing up my commitments on *Mirage*," Chang states, adding, "Issue #13 is my last issue; that's the issue where [*All My Children* star] Walt Willey appears."

As Chang goes back this fall semester to finish his degree, there are a couple of additional items on his dance card. Attending Pratt on a full scholarship, while working at Valiant and maintaining a 3.40 grade point average (B+), Bernard also finds time to get in some extra-curricular activities. "I play on the basketball team at Pratt," he relates, "I was the team captain last year, and I'll be playing again this year."

In addition to hoops, Chang also gives his working life a boost, taking life drawing and anatomy classes in addition to his architecture courses. He says this "kills two birds with one stone. It fulfills my credit requirements, but it also helps my comics career." Chang adds he'll also be "taking a script writing course this year, in case I decide to write comics later in my career."

It's pretty obvious that a guy with an established profession in comics doesn't need to continue his education, yet it means a lot to Bernard. "I feel it's important for me to get a college degree," Chang states. "I never know when I might want to do something else, and with my education I'll have a back-up plan. I'll have this degree in architecture I can utilize."

Chang has strong feelings about continuing an education, and recommends that everyone should give it their best shot. Chang urges, "It's important that kids realize that getting through high school and also getting a college degree are very important."

That's a lesson everyone could learn from.

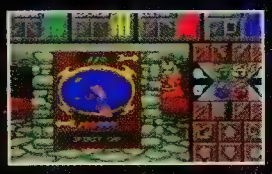
—Rob Samsel

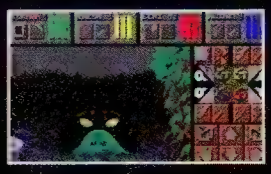
Real FLEER Deal

August sees a 200-card Marvel Universe set hit the streets in three different packages—hobby, magazine and Wal-Mart. The regular hobby-only version carries a suggested retail of $1.49 per nine-card pack. The 12-card packs shipped by magazine distributors have a suggested retail of $2.49. The Wal-Mart 11-card packs have no suggested retail but should sell for around $2.00 per pack, with box counts at 20 packs rather than the standard 36. The set comes with 23 chase cards, nine done in three varieties with distinct color versions. Four holograms pop up at a rate of two per box in both the hobby and magazine sets and one in the Wal-Mart. Ten Suspended Animation plastic cards come packed six per box in the hobby and magazine and three per box in the Wal-Mart. The three different sets will have nine separate Power Blast cards, featuring silver foil in the magazine version, red foil in the Wal-Mart set and gold foil at the hobby shops. They come nine in every hobby and magazine box and five in every Wal-Mart box. Marvel fans should be pleased with this fine-looking set.

An RPG You Can Really Sink Your Excsymyr* Into.

In the universe of role-playing games, there are many pretenders to the throne. Most are no deeper than a castle moat. But if you thirst for a role-playing adventure that has more to offer than just a mace and a potion, seek out *Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep*. It offers more characters, creatures and puzzles that require all the cunning and wit you can conjure up... without chanting.





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S.N.A.K. Posse for GOOD HEALTH

Imagine a comic that informed America's youth about the benefits of good nutrition and good health, but did it in a such an exciting manner that they never noticed? Well, that day has arrived. The **S.N.A.K. Posse**, a team of health-conscious heroes, has hit the shelves of your local comic stores this summer. The Posse is the brainchild of HCOM (short for **H**ealth **COM**ics) President Robert Orchanian, who says he was "searching for a fun and exciting way to get kids on the right track in terms of health and nutrition."

After coming up with the idea to give kids a good health message, Orchanian decided upon an unusual manner in which to pick the writer (David Pettigrew) and penciler (Denny Finke) team for his book: he used the *New York Times* classifieds. From there, to insure interest in the concept before launching the Posse, Orchanian tested his comic in focus groups in the local schools, with positive results. While there is a message in the comic, Orchanian states that "we're definitely not preaching. There's a very subtle message in there for living the proper lifestyle." Orchanian adds that he's "looking to expand [the Posse] into other media such as a cartoon show for children, toys and video games. Things of that nature." Certainly a goal worth shooting for.

Ask for *S.N.A.K. Posse* at your local comic shop, or order it directly from HCOM Inc., P.O. Box 462, Jefferson Valley, NY 10535.

—Rob Samsel

This Month in History

Historic comic book events that took place in the month of OCTOBER.

1939 *Marvel Comics* #1: The first Marvel comic features the first appearance of the Human Torch.

1943 *Batman* newspaper strip: Batman appears for the first time in a newspaper strip. It would last three years.

1952 *Mad* #1: America's most popular comic book satire magazine begins in comic book format size. *Mad* was changed to magazine size with #24.

1967 *Strange Adventures* #205: DC's supernatural hero Deadman debuts.

1970 *Conan* #1: Robert E. Howard's famous barbarian appears in comics for the first time, courtesy of writer Roy Thomas and artist Barry (Windsor-) Smith.

1988 *Batman*: Shooting begins on the first Batman film, on a massive five-block set of Gotham City in England.

1991 *X-Men* #1: Marvel launches its second X-Men title, with five different cover versions that sell a reported eight million copies total.

—W.A.C. & M.S.

GAMER'S GUIDE

BY ROBERT T. BOGLEY

Believe it or not, there really is a game called *GURPS*. You'd have a hard time finding a more stupid name, but you'd also have a hard time finding a better game. Standing for Generic Universal Role Playing System and produced by Steve Jackson Games, *GURPS* is definitely one of the best.

Anyone familiar with Hero Games's *Champions* will notice a lot of similarities between that game and this one; in fact, Steve Jackson gives *Champions* credit for strongly influencing the *GURPS* design. The basic system is quite simple, with optional rules allowing for greater detail, especially in playing out combat situations. Six-sided dice are the only type used in the game, so players won't have to run out and buy any bizarre ones. Characters are produced by spending Character Points, and are improved by gaining more points to spend.

While I have a lot of respect for this system, and am very pleased with its level of realism, it is not without its faults. For example, in *GURPS*, average humans are half as strong and intelligent as the strongest and most brilliant humans are. Sorry, folks, but this just ain't the way it is. I know for a fact that the average human is closer to one-fifth as strong as the strongest human, and, while it's much harder to quantify, I'm sure that the average human doesn't have half the smarts of Einstein. This bit of realism was probably sacrificed for the sake of playability, but my search for a perfect system goes on.

SUPERS™ & © STEVE JACKSON GAMES INC.

As the name specifies, this system is intended to be "universal"—the basic rules described above (and found in the *GURPS* Basic Set rulebook) can be used for role playing in any setting. Further details about role playing in various genres or historical backgrounds are provided in a wide selection of excellent sourcebooks, a good number of which feature licensed material.

GURPS Supers is the sourcebook for comic book-inspired, superpowered role playing. It contains notes on special applications of the basic rules in a superpowered campaign, and provides a healthy list of superpowers, advantages and disadvantages. These can be modified with enhancements and limitations to produce almost any sort of character a player envisions.

GURPS Supers also contains a short description of GURPS's official super-campaign world, which is more fully discussed in the worldbook, *GURPS International Super Teams*. (Players may, of course, use worlds of their own design, or one lifted from their favorite comics). This book attempts to depict our world as it would be if superpowered beings actually existed and had an impact on history and society. It is very nicely done, offering a fully realized view of an alternate present. Be warned, however—this world is a big-government fan's dream. Here, the United Nations has banned not only all nuclear weapons, but all national superteams as well, and has established its own superteams around the globe.

Other support material for the Supers genre includes *Mixed Doubles*, *Supers Adventures*, *Supertemps*, *Deathwish* and *I.S.T. Kingston*, the last of which focuses on the Caribbean. Other materials are in the works. *GURPS Wild Cards* is based on the superhuman-centered fiction anthology edited by George R.R. Martin, and *Aces Abroad* provides adventures based in that version of the world.

I don't think that anyone checking out this game will be disappointed.

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LOGAN'S RUN

By Robert J. Sodaro and Patrick Daniel O'Neill

With all the changes that have affected Marvel's most famous X-Man so far, is there anywhere new for Wolverine to go? Writer Larry Hama and artist Adam Kubert respond, "You bet!"

He's had the indestructible adamantium ripped from his bones. He's discovered that much of his remembered past may be a lie. It's even possible he's dying. The mysterious Canadian hero called Logan, AKA Wolverine, has undergone many changes in the past year or two. Many of them have been engineered by Larry Hama, who's been writing the solo adventures of the most popular X-Man since *Wolverine* #31, more than four years ago. Now, joined by artist Adam Kubert, Hama must find a new direction for Wolverine, one that will in all likelihood, return him to his former mutant teammates, the X-Men.

To Hama, that return is a given, along with the restoration of Wolverine's adamantium skeleton. "Everyone knows that's going to happen," he insists. "It's how it starts [that counts]." Pressed to name a time for Wolverine's readamantiumization or return to the X-Men—for instance, *Wolverine* #100—Hama refuses to get more specific than before the end of the year. "Honestly, I don't know how or when it's going to happen, but obviously it has to happen.

"It's like Superman dying and coming back to life. People don't mind as long as it's done in a satisfying and novel way. In Japan, one of the most popular subjects for motion pictures is something called the *Chushingura*, the tale of the 47 *ronin*, the 47 faithful retainers," Hama explains. "There are something like more than 300 features made of this story. It's a story that everyone knows, but people don't tire of it. Every time a new adaptation comes out, they flock to see it."

Once Wolverine's insides are back to the *status quo ante*, Hama says, his rejoining the X-Men is inevitable, despite rumors of his tying up with another mutant team, Excalibur. "If there are any plans of him joining Excalibur, they neglected to tell me," he laughs. "Obviously, the return to the X-Men is a *Chushingura* question. He's an X-Man... The way it's done is the surprise."

All of this comes as a surprise to artist Kubert, who denies any special knowledge about upcoming changes in Wolverine. "I have no idea about any 'return to normal' for Logan—and even if I did, I wouldn't say," he laughs.

Being the new guy on *Wolverine*, despite its obvious advantages, has been a bit frustrating for Kubert. All the recent changes in Wolverine mean that Kubert has yet to draw the "classic" version of the character.

"Sometimes I miss the fact that I really haven't had a chance to draw him with his mask on yet," he says. "I get to draw the wild hair and everything—it's a lot of fun, but at first I felt like I was getting on to the book just as he became a different Wolverine from the one everybody's familiar with. In retrospect, I think I'm fortunate to be on the book now, because he has undergone some heavy-duty changes. He's a character with such longevity. To some extent, I'm getting a chance to be part of a redefining of the character."

Kubert has been drawn into the book since his initial effort on it, #75, the first issue to explore the consequences of life without adamantium for Logan. For the artist, Wolverine has a magnetism caused by more than the metal in his bones.

"The appeal is his personality," Kubert says. "He's a real person with these powers. Wolverine comes across to me as a real person—other than being really cool and his attitude toward people and what he's doing. He's usually a take-no-prisoners type, but the Wolverine I'm doing now is slightly different, which makes him even more human."

Another attraction for Kubert, at least in the near future, is the quantity and quality of guest stars. Over the next several issues, Wolverine will get visits from Deadpool, Kane, Vanessa, and Gambit. Though details are still sketchy, *Wolverine* #89 may be a crossover with *Ghost Rider*. By #90, Logan is back on the X-Men's home turf of Westchester, N.Y.

Despite Wolverine's ongoing ties to the original mutant team, Hama says he is basically free to take the Canadian hero's story and characterization in his own direction. The writer looks at the events and locations of the X-Men's adventures as stage direction. "That's nothing," he insists. "The difficult part is always getting the character right.

"'Filling the shoes right' is what we call it. If the shoes don't fit, everyone knows it. It's understanding what basic nuances make that character tick, just doing it by feel. Once you've got that, it's only half the battle. Then you've got to come up with a good story structure and all the rest of it."

He says that the "team concept"—many writers having a hand in both Wolverine's and the X-Men's destinies—is not the damper on creativity that many fans might imagine. "It's a lot more cooperative than you think," Hama notes. "It's like, if Scott Lobdell [writer of several X-books] does something with the character and I say, 'Hey, that's pretty cool,' I'll incorporate it. It's a free bit. If I do something and Scott likes it, he might pick it up.

"I was quoted in *Wizard* once as saying something about rejecting a whole bunch of stuff, in my head, that Barry Windsor-Smith had done in the 'Weapon X' story in *Marvel Comics Presents*," he continues. "I don't know if was quoted correctly on that, or maybe I wasn't being clear in how I was expressing it. If there are things that come at you—the continuity, for instance—that are difficult to deal with, what writers have to do is ignore it.

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Logan can't avoid tangles with his arch-enemies, such as Lady Deathstrike.

GROWING UP KUBERT...

"I don't know when I realized that Dad's job was 'different.' Growing up with it, it was always there," says 34-year-old *Wolverine* artist Adam Kubert, son of another artist, comics great Joe Kubert. "He always did it. This was what my Dad did, and other kids' dads were mailmen or whatever. I didn't see it as being a unique thing, really. When we went to restaurants, we'd play a game where Dad would start drawing something and we would try to guess what it was before he finished. It was fun, but it didn't make me think, 'Wow, my Dad's different; he draws comic books.'

"I guess my friends thought it was pretty cool because the bathrooms in the house were filled with comics. But it didn't really affect me one way or the other."

Adam's younger brother Andy, who's currently penciling *X-Men*, has similar memories. "Growing up with comic books all around, I pretty much took what Dad did for a living for granted. I never appreciated it, never really got into it. My earliest recollection of knowing what he did is fourth grade, when he was a guest speaker at an assembly. They said he was a cartoonist, and the kids asked him to draw Snoopy and Blondie, and he did it!" Andy, 32, recalls, laughing. "It was a weird-looking Snoopy, I'll tell you. That's when it started to register."

Surprisingly, neither brother grew up wanting to enter their father's profession, although both began lettering comics in their teens. "I didn't decide I wanted to be a cartoonist until I was 21 or so," Adam says. "I was always an artist, I always drew things as a kid. It wasn't superheroes, just stuff. I was the kid who, in art classes, everybody came to for help."

Similarly, Andy didn't start drawing seriously until he was 20 years old. "I went to school to study packaging design for about six months and decided I didn't like it," he remembers. "So my Dad said I should come to his school for about a year. The plan was that I would come to school for a year to familiarize myself with it and then work in the office with my mom. But I got into the drawing and into comics, and that was it."

Both young men attended their father's now-famous School of Graphic and Comic Art, and both recall awkward moments. "With my Dad running the place and my brother in the same class? Yeah, it was really weird," Andy says. "My Dad made it 10 times tougher for us than for anybody else. We couldn't miss any school at all. 'You're going to school and you're getting your homework done!' 'But Dad, I'm 22 years old!'" he chuckles.

"I didn't want anybody to know my last name," Adam admits. "But after the first week or so, as people found out, it was no big deal; maybe I made a big deal out of it in my own head. I didn't want to be treated special, I didn't want to be looked at differently."

The Kubert name was a definite plus in their early careers, both artists note, although that early lettering work was also a solid door-opener. "I started lettering professionally when I was 13. That was my door into the business," Adam points out, "because I got to know the editors. After I went to Dad's school, I continued to letter. Having Kubert as a last name didn't hurt, but once I had my foot in the door, I was the one who had to prove myself and continue to do it."

Andy agrees. "Bringing in lettering definitely got me in the door, along with the Kubert name. As soon as they heard the name, I could get in. I'd be a liar if I said it didn't help. I thought at times about the raised expectations the name might bring with it."

The Kubert brothers continue to see their father's influence in their work, even though the average fan probably believes they now have their own styles. "My Dad's influence is definitely still there," Adam insists. "I try to tell a story, and that was something he drummed into my brain. He talked about changing the angle from panel to panel, to keep the page interesting. That's the strongest influence he had on me."

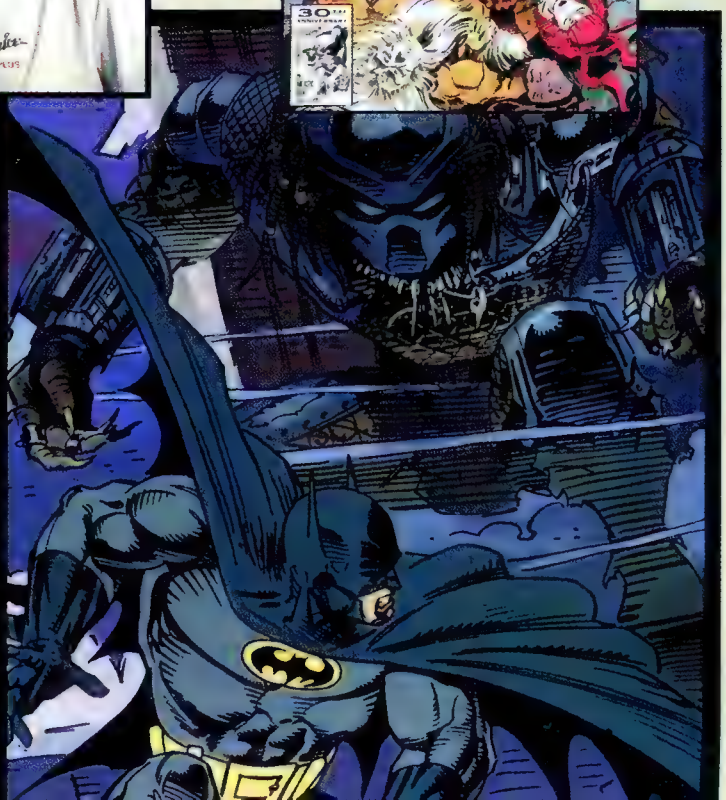
"In the beginning, I was totally influenced by my Dad," Andy recalls. "I still am. The *X-Men* stuff has a certain look and a certain feel. My storytelling fundamentals are still influenced by my Dad. I still try to do it the way he taught me. He drilled it into my head, going over my layouts, showing why he would do certain shots in certain places. There's stuff I do on *X-Men* that is part of doing superheroes, for impact, but basically, it's what Dad taught me. He might say otherwise," he laughs.

Although the brothers have worked together (notably on DC's 1987 *Doc Savage* mini-series and 1991 *Batman vs. Predator*), as have Andy and father Joe (on Marvel's *Ghost Rider* [vol. 3, 1992] #28-#31), the three Kuberts have never collaborated on anything, save an issue of DC's *Sgt. Rock* penciled by Joe, inked by Andy, and colored by Adam.

Andy figures it's unlikely that a major joint project will come up anytime soon. "I think all three of us want to do our own thing. Especially Dad—he likes to pencil and ink all his own stuff. He doesn't like to have anybody else touch what he does."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Below: Adam is the current *Wolverine* penciller, but Andy got his licks in, too.
Bottom: The Brothers Kubert collaborated on *Batman vs. Predator* in 1991.



Q*Bert: New Matter ©1992 JVW Electronics Inc. Based on original work © 1983 Columbia Pictures Industries Inc. Illustration by David Prager

Photos by J. Schuyler

Batman ™ & © DC Comics; Predator ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

If, 10 years ago, some writer said, 'OK, Wolverine has really only got three claws of adamantium, and one is really molybdenum,' you go, 'What? What happened?' We have to deal with that. We're stuck with that.

"There's, like, three or four camps on that," Hama elucidates. "The purists who say, 'It got into print, therefore it is the word,' and another camp that would say, 'Well, you know, it wasn't in the title book. It was in *Marvel Comics Presents*.' You have to sort of deal with it in some way.

"There's stuff that happened in 'Weapon X' that I got the word on from editorial," the writer continues. "They said, 'Some of this stuff really doesn't jive, so we either ignore it or try to fix it.' A lot of the stuff is discrepancies and things that were sort of inherited—things that were given to me [which] I had to run with and try to make the best I could out of it. It was not my decision to 'unadamantiumize' the Wolvester. It wasn't my idea to use implants either. But I had to figure a way to make it all work out.

"I've had a lot of experience doing that with [writing Marvel's] *G.I. Joe* with Hasbro, where one year Hasbro would decide we were going to have strange plant mutant creatures running around in *G.I. Joe*. I had to come up with a logical explanation for that. Keeps ya on your feet. I don't mind it. I find it challenging."

The cooperation between the other writers and Hama extends beyond back story. Another aspect to writing within the mutant sub-universe that Hama finds challenging is the yearly crossover among the many titles featuring the X-Men and their pals.

"I like that," he asserts. "It's dipping in the home pool. It sort of rejuvenates. You jump back into it with other people who are working on the pool characters and a lot of interchange goes on. You have these long days of meeting sessions. They'll book the entire day in the conference room. You go in there, they bring in breakfast, and you hash it out... [Eventually] you get tired of eating those Danishes," he laughs. "You wanna go home. 'Let's work this out.' Once you get that, you really get that back and forth. I think that's really important."

To that end, Wolverine is a part of this year's multi-title mutant get-together, "Phalanx Covenant."

"He's a major participant," Hama notes. "He's gotta be, because it crosses over into the *Wolverine* book. I also wrote the *Cable* story that's part of that."

The crossovers, the major changes in Wolverine's character, and the interplay with other mutant writers: Hama insists that none of that has affected his approach to writing *Wolverine*. It can't, because he doesn't have a singular approach to it.

"I try not to have a static approach to writing anything," Hama states. "I consciously try not to do a formula. I'm aware of the fact that it's very easy to fall into that trap and just do [formulaic] stuff."

On the other hand, it's very important to have some visual consistency to a character. Kubert maintains a very definite approach to drawing Wolverine.

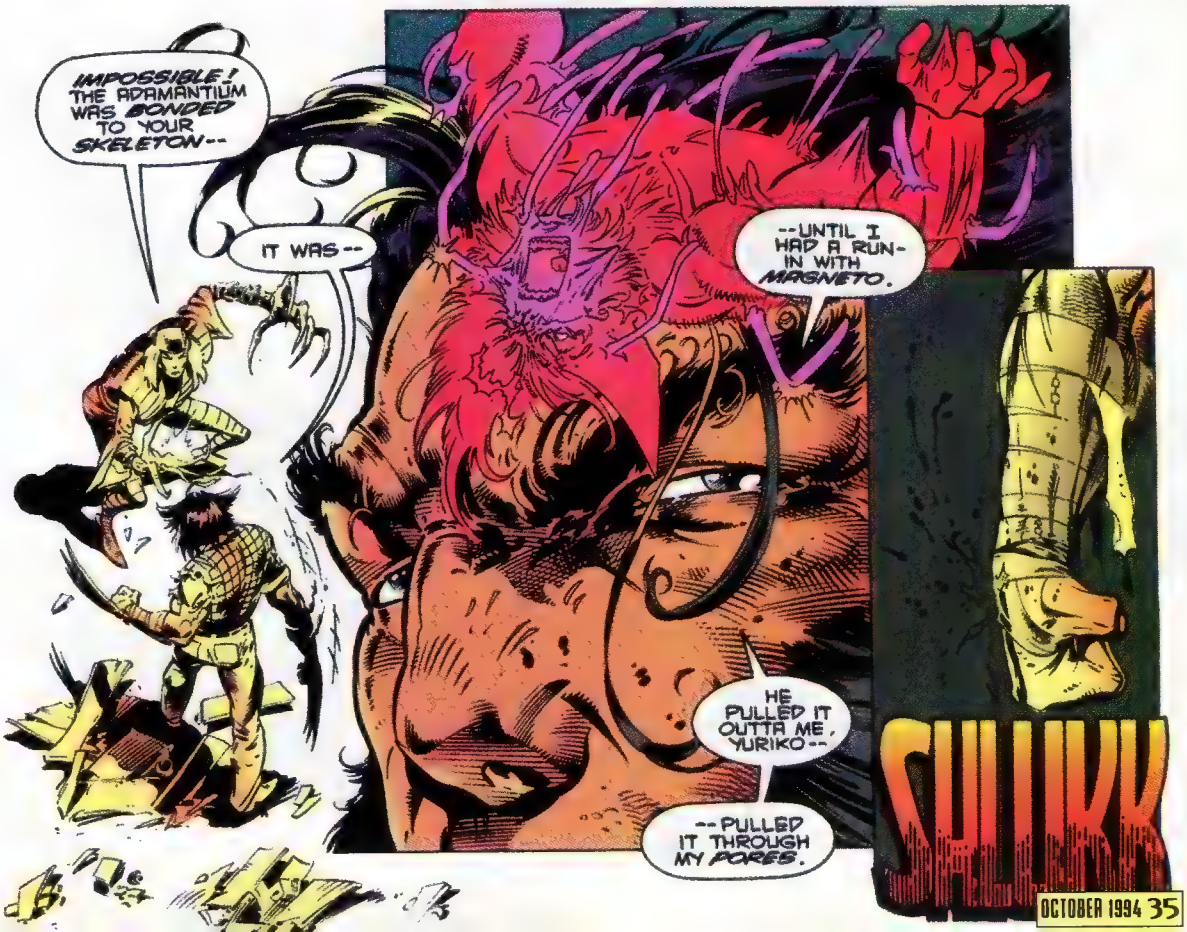
"My visual take on the character is influenced by everybody who came before me," he says. "I don't think there's any one person's version that I've adapted. I keep the stuff open all around me. I'm not copying it, I'm just absorbing it. If you want names, I think Marc Silvestri did the best Wolverine, and I really liked Mark Texeira's version. The proportions weren't right, but there was so much energy that it appealed to me."

When Kubert gets a plot in from Hama, he makes notes on it before digging out the visual information he needs to make the plot come alive.

"I don't like to even lay out a page until I have the references—for things like planes, for instance—because that helps me decide on angles and relationships," he asserts. "The locale can help me decide on foreground and background elements.

"Storytelling is, ultimately, the most important thing," Kubert insists. "If the reader can't understand what the hell is going on, I'm not doing the job. The second thing is to make it

Logan should be talking to a therapist about this stuff, not Lady Deathstrike.



as dramatic as possible. I don't want to neglect why people like this character—they like Wolverine because they like to see him in high-energy action."

In four years on *Wolverine*, and in more than two decades in comics, Hama has worked with a number of now well-known artists, including Silvestri, Texeira, and current artist Kubert. Hama's relationship with the artist can make a difference in the experience of working on a title.

"There are some artists [for whom] I could write a plot and it seems like they're reading my mind. I'm always elated when it comes back and it's better than what I thought... Adam is a joy to work with. He's really smart. His drawing gets better with every panel. He's a real learning sponge. He really likes doing it—which is most of the battle. He really gets a kick out of it. I get a kick out of just looking at the pages as they come in. I love working with Michael Golden. I love working with Marc Silvestri. Ron Wagner is another mind reader. I would do stuff and it would just appear the way I saw it in my head."

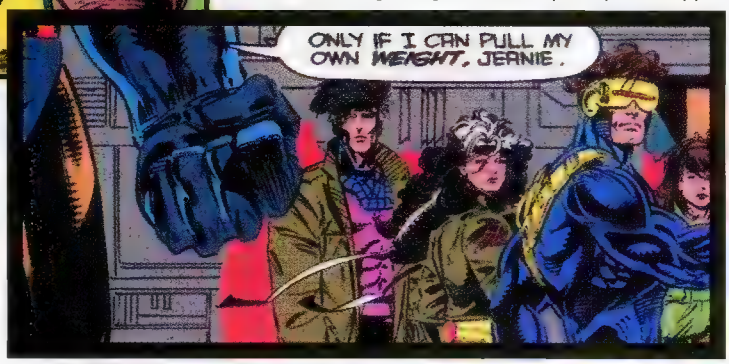
Kubert is equally complimentary of Hama. "Larry writes the book and I interpret what he writes for me," he notes. "I get a pretty complete plot from Larry, and his stuff is excellent—clear and easy to interpret. Whenever you're given a plot, there's always room to play around, things left up to the artist's interpretation. I'm participating in the storytelling as much as possible.

"At the beginning of the current arc, Bob Harras called and asked what characters I'd like to draw, and I said, 'Mojo,' because I think he's a really cool character," Kubert recalls. "Bob said, 'Maybe later on,' so I said, 'Gambit.' And that's going to be coming up."

Much has changed in the comic book business since Hama broke in during the 1970s. Back then, one writer or artist doing a long run on a title was the rule rather than the exception. Hama says he accepts the change to short runs for creators, but it's not the way he prefers to work.

"Everyone has got their own thing. I try to get on a project or a book and see it out, because I like to settle in with a character and just explore it," he says. "That's how we learn about these characters. That's how *I* learn about the characters—by doing [them]. How you learn about comic characters, or comic strip characters, is all incremental. You don't pick up one copy of *Superman*, *X-Men*, or *Fantastic Four*, and know all about these guys in one issue. You have to keep at it. It's like you've been reading *Peanuts* for 30 years. You know everything there is to know about Snoopy, Charlie Brown, and Linus, and all those characters—all their nuances and peccadilloes. For the life of you, you couldn't sit down and tell, from one three-panel strip, what that series was about, because what you've absorbed, in all the time of reading that strip, is the characterization, and that's what you like about it.

"It seems like I'm diverging from the point, but I'm not," he insists. "I'm getting back to the idea of guys leaving and going to do a new project, doing that project for six months, and going to do something else. Without that sense of continuity, which is the basis of our form, you don't have anything. OK, you do issue #1 of *Potato Salad Man*. You could sell a lot of those because it's a collector's item. All you're doing is appealing to the collector market. But, sooner or later, like the famous Dutch tulip bulbs, the collector market has to collapse. All that's really important about what we create is the characterization—the characters. That's what survives." ☆



Above: Logan knows that he'll need time to recover before he can rejoin the X-Men.

Below: What was once unbreakable...

Robert J. Sodaro is a freelance writer based in Connecticut.

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Who will bite the bullet?

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Grand Prize (One winner)

The winning epitaph entry (what epitaph entry? We'll get to that in a second) will appear on the character's tombstone in an upcoming issue of *Codename: Stryke Force*. On top of that distinct honor, the winner will also receive *Codename: Stryke Force* #1 (Blue Edition), issues #2-#6 signed by Brandon Peterson, and an original page of *Codename: Stryke Force* art signed by Brandon Peterson and framed, all ready to be mounted (so to speak).

Second Prize (4 winners)

A set of *Codename: Stryke Force* #1 (Gold Edition) and #2-#6, all signed by Brandon Peterson.

Third Prize (15 winners)

A copy of *Codename: Stryke Force* #1 signed by that Peterson fella.

Fourth Prize (30 winners)

A supercool Codename: Stryke Force poster, featuring the very large Black Anvil.

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WELL, THAT'S ALL FINE AND GOOD, BUT WHAT'S THAT ABOUT AN EPITAPH? WELL, WITH THE CODENAME: STRYKE FORCE MEMBER KICKING THE BUCKET (WHICH ONE? GO READ *CODENAME: STRYKE FORCE #6!*), HE/SHE NEEDS A QUICK ONE-LINER SUMMING UP THEIR LIFE. SOMETHING LIKE, OH, "HERE LIES FIREPANTS. HE AM DEAD." (TRY AND MAKE IT A LITTLE COOLER, A LITTLE MORE WITTY, THOUGH. AND IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO LONG—WE'RE TALKING THE INSCRIPTION ON A GRAVESTONE HERE.) AND THEN WHAT?

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Top Cow Productions, their immediate families, and anybody with a Roman numeral after their name. What's your problem? Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Stryke Force Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Pants, cheese, and monkey are three of the best words in the English language. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected by members of Top Cow Productions. All decisions are final.

For the names of the winners, available after October 31, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Stryke Force Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

WINNERS

Congratulations to the winners of *Wizard* #35's Crow Contest!

Grand Prize Winner

Michelle Ortiz (age 20) Glendale, AZ

Second Prize Winners

Chris DeChick (age 22) Auburn, NY
David Lipscomb (age 27) Springfield, MO
Jesse Maldonado (age 16) Los Angeles, CA
Mark Sigsby Los Angeles, CA
Gerfre Tijerino San Francisco, CA

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Crow Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064 for a complete list of winners.

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BAD GIRLS

Who says female characters don't sell? Don't tell that to these women— or their creators.

For years, the conventional wisdom in comics has been that female characters can't succeed in their own books. After spirited efforts with protagonists like Wonder Woman and She-Hulk, companies resigned themselves to the fact that their largely male audience largely wants to read about large males. Female characters had a place, of course, but the cover logo and the *Wizard* Top 10 were not it. ● This boys-club atmosphere seemed to be one of the last hard-and-fast rules about how the comic book business works. But conventional wisdom has taken a pounding in the past five years. ● Image Comics destroyed the notion that creator-owned superheroes couldn't compete with Marvel and DC Comics. The hero business now flourishes at several companies. ● Valiant trashed the idea that fans wouldn't go for coupon promotions, premium issues, and other promotions. #0 issues and ashcan specials are now as commonplace as angst. ● The first *Batman* movie laid waste to the belief that small-bodied comedic actors shouldn't play superheroes. Jerry Seinfeld and Dana Carvey now have hope for future roles. ● Another "truth" that has fallen on hard times is the rule that females don't sell. Catwoman scratched its eyes out. Mantra cast a lethal spell on it. Lady Rawhide whipped it. Shi chopped its head off. Vampirella drained its blood. And Lady Death finished it off. ● These women, all featured prominently in new comics, are giving male heroes like Spawn, Wolverine, and Batman a run for their money. Suddenly, the battle for reader dollars has become a battle of the sexes.

By Rogers Cadenhead

A Felonious Feline

When Jim Balent took on his first regular series assignment, *Catwoman* for DC Comics, the artist believed that Selina Kyle's book was a purrfect place to get noticed.

"I thought the book would stand out on the newsstand," Balent says. "It's different from the rest—there's so many male superheroes out there."

Though Catwoman has been around since the spring of 1940, her current ongoing series is probably her biggest success. In its first year, Balent and writer Jo Duffy established Catwoman as an enigmatic adventurer whose criminal excesses are sometimes overshadowed by heroic deeds. Issue #13, in which Kyle manages to help a disabled friend walk again and enrich her own bank account at the same time, is a good example of the line the book straddles.

"She's a very outgoing, exciting character to read about," Balent says. At her best, Catwoman is solitary, at odds with those on both sides of the law. "We're working on a storyline in which Catwoman gets involved with a covert government agency," he says. "The agency catches her, and she is forced to steal for them until she can turn the tables on them."

Batman will continue to be a regular presence in Kyle's life, though Balent suggests that the relationship will remain a rocky one.

"Our book is part of the Batman family of titles, but it's sort of the black sheep. Catwoman doesn't get along with anybody too well, and everybody's on her blacklist."

Upcoming issues of the book are being penned by comics veteran Chuck Dixon. Balent looks forward to the collaboration. "I'd like to be on *Catwoman* for a long time," he says.

A Definite Lady Killer

Readers of William Tucci's *Shi* don't learn a lot about his enigmatic title character in the first few issues of her series, but one thing becomes perfectly clear: Shi's not someone to have on your bad side.

Ana Ishikawa has been trained to be a killing machine by the Sohei, an ancient Japanese order of warrior monks to which her father belonged. The machine works perfectly when Shi arrives in New York City.

"Shi's pretty much a lost soul torn between two cultures, neither of which really accepts her," creator Tucci says of his Crusade Comics headliner. "She's half Japanese and half white, and part of the Sohei order of warriors."

During the eight-issue storyline that introduces the character, Shi will face off against Masahiro Arashisama, AKA Arashi, an affluent Japanese man who fancies himself a samurai lord. In issue #1, Arashisama kills a homeless man for the crime of rooting through the garbage bins outside his building.

"Arashi murdered [Shi's] father and brother," Tucci says. To present the full scope of the villain's activities, a backup story will begin in *Shi* #4, shipping in September, entitled "Arashi's Memoirs." The story will detail how the character rose in the ranks from a yakuza executioner to a kingpin in the criminal organization.

Shi's internal battles are as much a focus of the book as her external ones. "There are two sides pulling on her—her mechanical killing side and her spiritual side," Tucci says. "She's starting to slip into this revenge mode, and her emotions are getting in the way."

The character, named after the Japanese symbol for death, even evinces her inward struggles via her outward appearance. "The Sohei wear a white cowl, but Shi is not a Sohei, so she takes white kabuki face paint and covers her face with it," the artist says. "It's like a death mask, almost, covering who she really is. In one scene, a tear breaks the makeup, exposing her real self."

Crusade Comics is Tucci's own company, and *Shi* #1, released this spring, was its, er, maiden effort. As he was preparing to publish the book, Tucci faced a lot of pessimistic remarks about its chances.

"Everybody was saying girl books don't sell, the timing is off, and it's the worst time to get into comic books," he says. "I had a lot of faith in the character—there was no way I wasn't going to do it. It took off way more than I expected."

WILLIAM TUCCI'S SHI (BELOW). DC'S CATWOMAN (LEFT).

The Lady is a Vamp

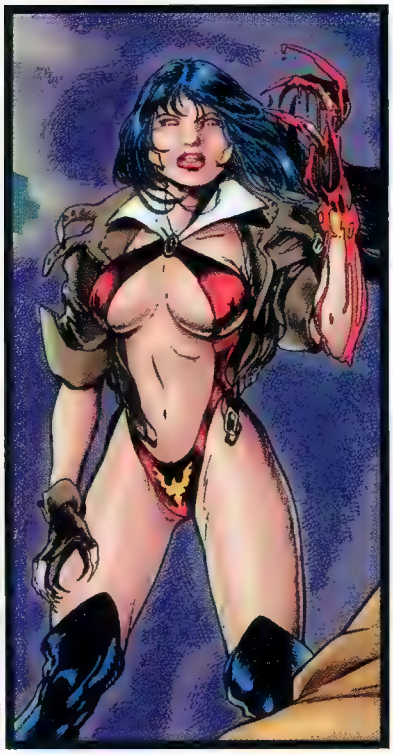
Like Catwoman, Vampirella is a character with an established history that dates back many years. But the pros working on the Harris Comics revival are trying to live some of that history down.

"The origin she had was kinda silly," says writer Tom Sniegoski, who was a fan of the old James Warren magazines that featured the character. "She was from this planet where blood was the water source, and she stowed away on a spaceship to Earth. She had to feed on us to sustain herself."

Though her past history isn't being completely discarded, Sniegoski gives a strong hint about how it will be changed when Vampirella's origin is probed in 1995: "A villain in the near future is going to reveal he's been having a good time with false memories."

In the *Vengeance of Vampirella* series, the character's

Catwoman ™ & © DC Comics. Shi ™ & © William Elliott Tucci.



VAMPIRELLA ™ & © HARRIS PUBLICATIONS INC

HARRIS COMICS' CURRENT VAMPIRELLA (LEFT) HAS MORE BITE THAN THE BEAUTIFULLY DRAWN BUT CAMPY VAMPI OF THE ORIGINAL WARREN STRIPS (ABOVE).

world is established as a highly paranormal one. "Supernatural events are a common everyday occurrence—you could walk down the street and bump into a werewolf," Sniegoski says. "It's a world where you definitely lock your doors and your windows."

Vampirella is a positive force in this environment. "A shining light in the darkness," Sniegoski says. "That's what confuses some of the supporting cast members—a creature that should be evil is not evil."

Vengeance is Sniegoski's biggest assignment to date, and he's enthusiastic about the way Vampirella's new adventures have been received. "People have a strong feeling for her," Sniegoski says. "Since doing the book, I've run into people so devoted that they had the whole run of Warrens in their basement. She's a hidden cult superstar."

Harris owns the rights to all of the Warren material, which Sniegoski says was influential to him as a fan. "I remember reading the *Eerie* stuff when everyone else was reading Spider-Man or Batman."

In future issues of *Vengeance* and other Vampirella titles, her sidekick, Adam Van Helsing, is in for some major changes, the writer says. A new female character called the Passion will also be introduced, and Sniegoski expects her to become a recurring "villain/hero." In the fall, Vampirella may appear in a title starring the reincarnation of another Warren regular, the Rook.

"The old Rook was almost an adventuring time traveler with a western slant," Sniegoski notes. "The new Rook is going to be more reality-hopping—responsible for chaos infesting all these different realities."

Though Vampirella's outfit—all four square

Bad fad?

This past spring, the entire reading, collecting, and investing sectors of the comic book industry experienced a unique phenomenon, one that has continued to pervade the industry. We're alluding to the explosion of popularity among comics featuring strong female characters in leading roles, better known as the "bad girl" explosion.

Where does the current focus on bad girls come from? A number of places. When Harris Comics began releasing new issues of *Vampirella* back in November of 1992, the series was met with lukewarm interest by collectors. Retailers were especially reluctant to take a chance on a book with a lead female character, and they turned in small orders. This reinforced the perception that comics featuring female characters as the title attraction had an extremely underground (read: minimal) following. When Vampi's longtime fans realized that new adventures were being published, they quickly scrambled to find the available issues, causing a large swell in back issue prices. It appeared that with an erratic publishing schedule (due to problems with creator commitments), Harris wasn't ready to capitalize on Vampi's renaissance of popularity. Anxious not to make the same mistake twice, the company began banking issues of *Vengeance of Vampirella* in late '93. It launched the title last April, with enthusiastic results.

Before the release of *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1, the second building block of the bad girl rage emerged with Chaos! Comics's release of *Lady Death* #1 in January of 1994. *Lady Death* was initially another victim of lack of faith in a female lead character; the title was ordered sparsely. Surprisingly, the character's large underground following from her earlier shenanigans in Chaos!'s various *Evil Ernie* comics, as well as a spiffy chromium cover, resulted in unexpected demand for the first issue. During the spring, with demand on *Lady Death* continuing to escalate, Harris released *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1, and Crusade Comics released *Shi* #1; all were runaway hits. Action within the secondary or back issue market was immediate. Today *Lady Death*, *Vampirella* and *Shi* continue to lead the bad girl revolution, and titles such as *Wonder Woman*, *Mantra*, and *Catwoman* have started to pick up steam in both the new and back issue markets.

The bad girl movement has been receiving much attention lately, raising several questions. Does the female readership in comics favor the movement? After all, these books do feature strong-willed women. Or will they thumb their noses, appalled at the possible sexual and misogynist qualities of the books?

"I think some of the characters are really great," states *A Distant Soil* writer/artist Colleen Doran, "but some of them just get up my nose.

"I think that most women readers find this stuff repulsive, causing them to turn right around and walk out of the store in disgust," she adds. "But if the people are buying it, it's certainly not the publisher's fault for publishing it."

Former *Catwoman* writer, friend of Doran, and amateur hot coal walker Jo Duffy has a different view of the bad girls trend. "I think it is so incredibly fantastic. I have always loved characters like Sue Storm, [AKA] the Invisible Woman, who's such a good mommy, but I've always hated that *that's* all we really got. [I hated the fact] that bad girls had to be villains and we could never do a bad girl as a protagonist. I think rotten women are a lot [more vicious] than rotten men—they're sneakier, and most of them have a lot more imagination and better clothes.

"My hope for the future is that there are enough [bad girls] that people stop being concerned that it's a phenomenon that's going to die out. They should just go on and be part of the whole gang, the way they always should've been."

As to how male creators feel about the subject, *Shi* writer/artist William Tucci doesn't believe his portrayal of the lead character is sexist or misogynist at all. He claims the reason he made his character female was as a tribute to women, and their more beautiful qualities. According to Tucci, a former fashion illustrator, "There's nothing more beautiful or fluid than the female form. I could've just as easily made my book about a male character.

"It's a great thing that female characters can carry their own books now, because these characters are every bit as good, if not in most cases better, than their male counterparts," he adds, pointing to the secondary roles women often play in team books.

Lady Death creator Brian Pulido defends his character by explaining, "Sure she's scantily clad, but she's always completely and utterly in control, even though she may occasionally use sex as a weapon.

"Comics are about fun," he adds, addressing his character's "political incorrectness." "They are supposed to be about a flight of fancy. If you're going to take comics too seriously, you should go read *Newsweek*."

—Rich Sumrall & Andrew Vachss

Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido

BRIAN PULIDO'S LADY DEATH.

inches of it—tends to be the focus of talk about the character, Sniegoski says that the stories are what keep people interested.

"A lot of people can't believe she's back," he says, "and there's a younger generation who don't have the nostalgic feeling [and] are getting into the more supernatural superhero stuff."

A Hell of a Woman

One of the first signs of a changing trend in comics was the appearance—and quick disappearance from the stands—of *Lady Death* #1. The Chaos! Comics heroine gives an entirely different connotation to the phrase "kiss of death."

Lady Death got her start in the black-and-white *Evil Ernie* mini-series from Eternity Comics during 1991-92. Chaos! recently republished the material as *Evil Ernie: Youth Gone Wild!* Writer Brian Pulido—who is also Chaos! Comics's publisher—and artist Steven Hughes produced both titles.

In *Youth Gone Wild!*, Ernie is a psychotic who develops a crush on Lady Death, a demonic entity who visits him during dream sequences. Her main role in the book is to encourage him to break away from small-time homicide and get into the business of full-scale slaughter.

"We're not the milquetoast comic book company," says writer and Chaos! founder Pulido. "We're not pretending to be pretty comics."

Pulido describes Lady Death's stories as blending elements of fantasy and horror. Her first three-issue mini-series established how she was once Hope, the daughter of a feudal lord who consorted with demons. After Hope is sentenced to be burned at the stake, she escapes by shouting an incantation that sends her to Hell. She manages to triumph in her new hometown, but is cursed to remain there until all living things perish from the Earth. She takes the news with aplomb. "If the living must die so I may return to Earth," she says in *Lady Death* #3, "then they will die!"

In the next Lady Death mini-series, *Caught Between Heaven and Hell*, the four-issue tale will pit Lady Death against Purgatori, Lucifer's beloved. Before that, however, there will be a new Evil Ernie mini-series, *The Revenge*, set to begin in October. There's also a special Chaos! comic available through this issue of *Wizard*, *Lady Death* #1/2.

"In *Lady Death* #1/2, you're going to begin to see that through all the brutality there is a soft side," Pulido says. The issue is available through a coupon offer on page 48.

Though Lady Death can't be described as a hero, Pulido thinks that readers will continue to back the character. "A thousand books come out a month and the good guy wins in all of them," Pulido says. "Isn't it time for a change?"

They Are Woman

Though Catwoman, Shi, Vampirella, and Lady Death are garnering most of the "Bad Girl" attention, there are other characters who are cut from the same cloth. At Marvel, Mary Jane Parker continues to play a role in the life—or should that be lives?—of Peter Parker.

"She gives Peter a focus, something to come home to—a life outside of Spider-Man," says Mark Bagley, artist on *Amazing Spider-Man*.

In the ongoing Spider-Man titles, Mary Jane is leaving the couple's New York apartment to resolve some family problems in her hometown of Pittsburgh at the same time as Peter continues to go through troubles of his own.

"The more solid baggage you can bring on, the better for the stories," Bagley says.

Mary Jane has been a memorable character since her relationship with Parker blossomed in the '70s. "She was the girl that Peter was ducking for months while he was pining away for Gwen Stacy," Bagley says.

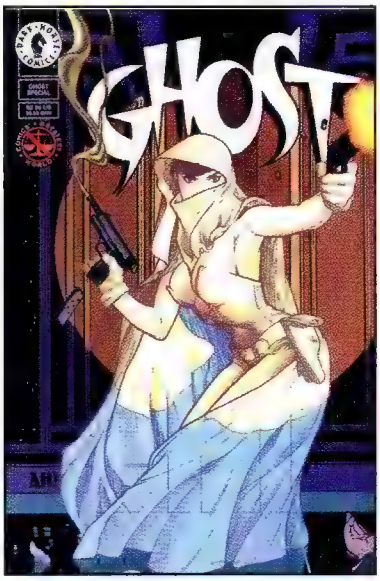
Rogue and Psylocke of the X-Men are also quite popular. Strong female characters have been a major part of the success of *Uncanny X-Men* and related titles, and fans are always clamoring for more appearances by this duo.

Another female protagonist who is gaining attention in a superhero universe is Mantra, created by writer Mike Barr. However, there's an important distinction to make between her and most women: the Malibu Ultraverse star is actually a man trapped in a woman's body. The body's original personality may still be in there somewhere, too.

In Topps Comics's *Zorro* series, writer Don McGregor and artist Mike Mayhew have taken the female protagonist to fairly new territory—the 19th century. Lady Rawhide, who first appeared in issue #3, is a woman in Spanish California of the early 1800s who's trying to break out of her expected role. This being comics, Anita Santiago does so by becoming a larger-than-life adventurer in the tradition of Zorro himself. She is dressed as provocatively as most comic heroines, but one element McGregor and Mayhew are trying to play up is the reaction of others to her attire.

"She's dressed in a very comic-book-hero-

ine kind of outfit, and it allows us to play with the conventions of comic books," says McGregor. "With Lady Rawhide, everybody reacts to the way she's dressed. In a typical comic book, a heroine walks up with almost no clothing on and no one reacts."



John Byrne, who penned more than 25 issues of Marvel's second *She-Hulk* series, is writing and drawing a new comic with a female lead under his Legend imprint for Dark Horse Comics. *Babe* is described as a light-hearted look at superheroics, though it isn't quite as satirical as his *She-Hulk* issues were.

An interesting offshoot of the rise in female-led comics is the cooperation between pros on the different titles. *Catwoman*'s Jim Balent is doing Lady Death pinups for future issues of her series, and *Shi* #2 features an illustration from Vampirella artist Buzz. *Shi*'s Tucci calls Pulido a "mentor" because of the help and support Pulido offered as Crusade was being launched, and many of the pros on these comics have discussed their like-minded projects.

These links seem likely to spill into intercompany crossovers, though nothing's official yet. A three-character, three-company book is one of the ideas being batted around.

As the idea that female characters don't sell books fades from currency, a new perception is forming: that the books are selling because attractive female characters sell books.

"'Of course, if you put a beautiful woman in a bikini, it's going to sell,'" writer Barr recalls being told after *Mantra* began to garner attention. "I'm hearing both sides now."

Barr says that if that was the case, it would've been done a long time ago. "If that's all it took, everyone would have done it."

Tucci says that the trend begins and ends with interesting heroines. "People are tired of these overblown male characters with bulging muscles and no brains," he says. "A woman does not have the physical strength that most of the male characters have, so they have to have some kind of other dimension to them."

The physical attractiveness of a female character probably helps to get a comic noticed, *Vampirella*'s Sniegoski admits, "but I think that wears off really fast."

He says the reason for the recent success has been the "untapped potential" in female protagonists. "Think about all of the female comic books that have come out over the last 10 years. Most of them are really bad."

Barr says the present trend comes from a desire of pros and readers to see more female characters. "To some extent, it could be considered a feminist issue," he says. "It might come down to something psychological; a lot of readers today were raised by [single] mothers...so they might be more willing to see a female in a position of leadership."

Regardless of the origin of the movement, it seems likely to hang out in the comic shops for some time to come.

"This is a whole new wave," Tucci says. "They're not silly books—each is a good read that is written well. In the end, that's what is going to keep the audience." ☆

Rogers Cadenhead is a freelance writer based in Texas who swears he saw Thelma, Louise, and Selina pass him on the highway.

DARK HORSE'S GHOST (AT LEFT) JOINS THE RANKS OF THE BEAUTIFUL-AND-BEYOND-THE-GRAVE. ZORRO'S ARCH-FLIRT, LADY RAWHIDE (ABOVE). MANTRA OF MALIBU'S ULTRAVERSE (BELOW).

MANTRA ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT INC. GHOST ™ & © DARK HORSE COMICS. ZORRO ™ & © ZORRO PRODUCTIONS INC.

Survey Says...

We gave the mighty *Wizard* research staff some time away from their phones, faxes, and desks to find out just what people out for an afternoon of copious consumption thought about some of the modern crop of comic book "bad girls." We sent 'em to record stores, bookstores, and even comic stores, and in a semi-scientific survey of 100 people, which broke down to about 46% women to 54% men, we discovered some pretty interesting stuff.

Longevity pays, as, when asked to identify a female comic book character off the top of their heads, most people named DC's venerable Wonder Woman. Over half of the people either couldn't come up with one such character or named fairly obscure ones (as in "Other"—see chart 1). Of course, we wouldn't send our people out unarmed. They hit the streets equipped with clipboards, pens, and binders with color pages from comics featuring six very diverse characters: Zephyr from Valiant's *Harbinger*, Marvel's X-Woman Jean Grey, DC's Lois Lane, Harris's Vampirella, Wonder Woman, and Cartoon Books's Thorn from Jeff Smith's *Bone*.

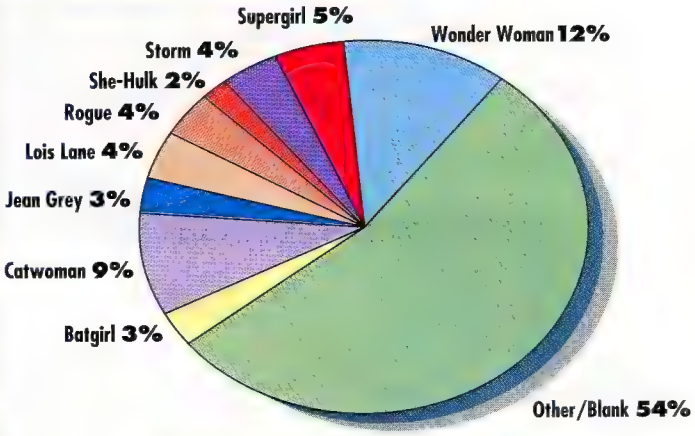
Asked to rate how these fictitious women were portrayed—by male writers and artists, no less—on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), women were most taken with Thorn. This is quite interesting because Thorn was the only character shown in black-and-white, which might have caused the average survey subject to pass her off as uninteresting compared to her color "cousins." Thorn also edged out WW as the favorite of the male respondents. The biggest schism between the sexes was over Vampirella. She not only averaged a full "image point" lower among women voters, but earned the lowest point rating for characters in this category among these voters (see chart 2). Incidentally, female voters tossed out comments such as "Oh, my...*God*" and "I don't like it." Still, Vampi overwhelmed the competition when it came to picking the most interesting character of our double triumvirate. Kinda makes you wonder what the shoppers had on their mind that afternoon (see chart 3).

One hint: the word "sex" came up a lot during the course of our study. Often the word "object" followed closely behind. Some of the less abusive comments our crew received on the subject include one woman's observation that she saw these characters as "Strong independent bimbos with anti-gravity bodies." Most women observed that the images were "sexist" and "exploitative." An older man made the obvious insight that "sex is used to get readers." Uh, yeah. Another older male remarked that this stuff was "not for younger readers." (However, he asked whether he could have our copies when we were done.) One woman complained, "Why do women have to don costumes? Skimpy ones, at that?" A major comic book fan (male) recognized that "lately some are becoming more realistic, well-rounded characters, but there's still many that are basically T&A sex objects." Another fanboy summed up this survey with what appears to be the general consensus of the male readers (who make up the majority of comic readers) polled: "[These portrayals are] exploitative of the female body; however, I don't find this objectionable." That attitude will keep "bad girls" around for some time to come.

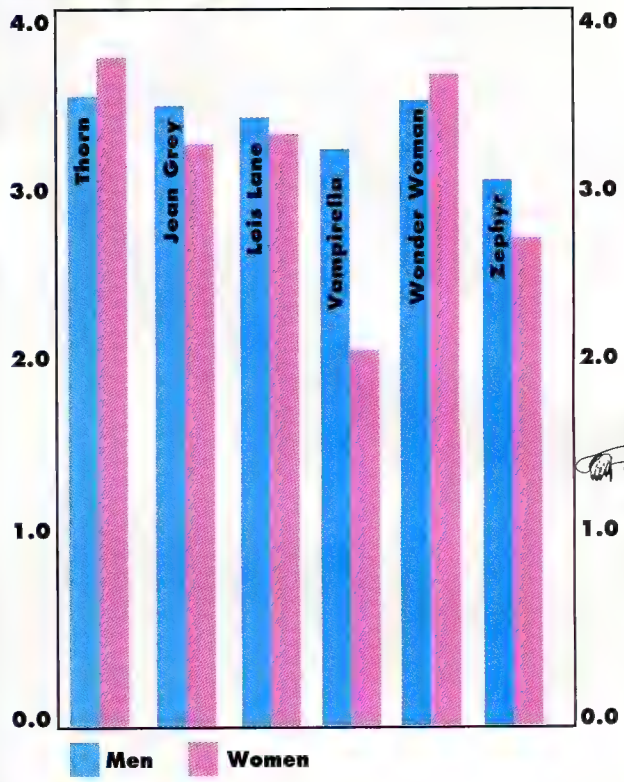
—Frank Berdowitz

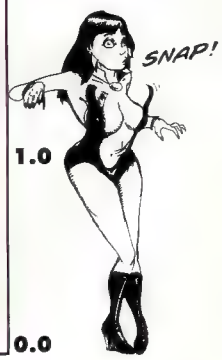
LITTLE VAMPIRELLA CARTOON DRAWN BY OUR OWN DAVEY PRAGER WHEN HE WORKED AT HARRIS

3. Character Recognition

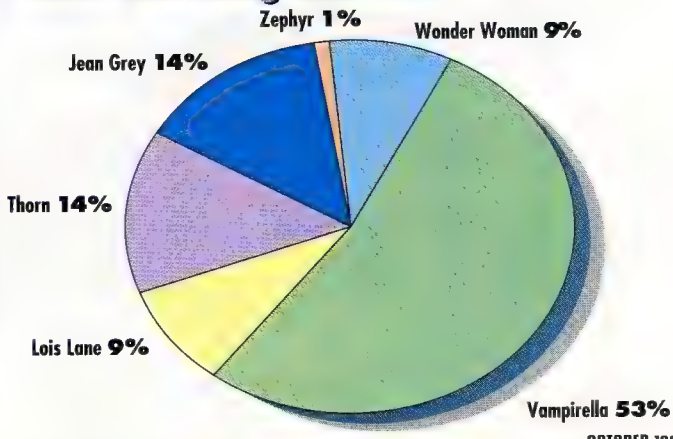


2. Image Rating





3. Most Interesting Character



That ain't no lady!
Hughes 93
JENSEN

She may not be a lady in the truest sense of the word, but Lady Death sure makes you question your moral standpoint on necrophilia. She doesn't? Maybe it's just us. Anyway, for two bucks you get a whole bunch of comic, even if it is a #1/2 issue. Here's the deal:

24 pages of original, full-color comic by *Lady Death*'s Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes

Sizzling Lady Death cover by Hughes

Lady Death sketchbook

In-depth interview with Pulido and Hughes

and two awesome staples!

Legal Rigamarole

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. The coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. Each request must be accompanied by $2 for shipping and handling or we'll jam an M-80 in your butt. Requests will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Offer good only while supplies last. Please allow eight to 12 weeks for delivery.

This offer expires October 6, 1994. Lady Death ™ & © 1994 Brian Pulido.

WIZARD™ CONTEST

Fleer Masterpiece!

INSTEAD OF ANOTHER CRUMMY COMIC BOOK POSTER, HOW'D YOU LIKE TO HANG AN ORIGINAL PIECE OF HILDEBRANDT BROS. ART, FEATURING MARVEL'S VICIOUS VENOM, ON YOUR BEDROOM WALL? YEAH? WELL, ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS READ ON, DO WHAT WE TELL YOU TO DO, AND PRAY TO WHATEVER GOD YOU WORSHIP.

™ & © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

Grand Prize (One winner)
An original painting by Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, featuring the tongued wonder Venom, all framed and ready to be hung anywhere.

Second Prize (10 winners)
A set of the 90-card Marvel Masterpieces '94 trading card set, featuring all bonus card inserts!

Third Prize (50 winners)
A pack of the super-spiffy 1994 Fleer Marvel Masterpieces trading cards, featuring the incomparable talents of artists Greg and Tim Hildebrandt.

SO HOW DO YOU ENTER THIS SMOKIN' CONTEST? SIMPLE. SEE THAT COUPON THINGIE DOWN THERE? FILL THAT OUT, JAM IT IN AN ENVELOPE, SLAP A STAMP ON IT AND SHIP IT OFF TO:

Fleer Masterpiece Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Get with the program! The deadline's October 31, 1994!
Get yer rear in gear to win this awesome art from Fleer!

OUT OF ALL THE ENTRIES WE RECEIVE, WE'LL THROW 'EM ALL IN A SWIMMING POOL (OR SOMETHING) AND RANDOMLY PULL OUT ALL THE WINNERS!

WINNER

Congratulations to the winner of *Wizard* #35's Wolverine Contest!

Answers: Panel 1, Sabretooth; **Panel 2,** Jean Grey; **Panel 3,** Mariko; **Panel 4,** Cyber; **Panel 5,** Professor Abraham Cornelius; **Panel 6,** Guardian.

Grand Prize Winner:
Chris Hannan (age 12) Metairie, LA

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Fleer Corp., their immediate families, and that mysterious third Hildebrandt brother. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Fleer Masterpiece Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Fleer rhymes with a lot of things. Beer. Dear. Smear. Interfere. Leer. Pier. Cavalier. Ear. Clear. The list is mercilessly endless. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on November 1, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners, available after November 25, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Fleer Masterpiece Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

CONTEST

Official Fleer Masterpiece Coupon

ENTRIES DUE BY OCTOBER 31, 1994!

I am:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) _____ AGE _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE) _____

the Drawing board

The showcase of comic book fan art.

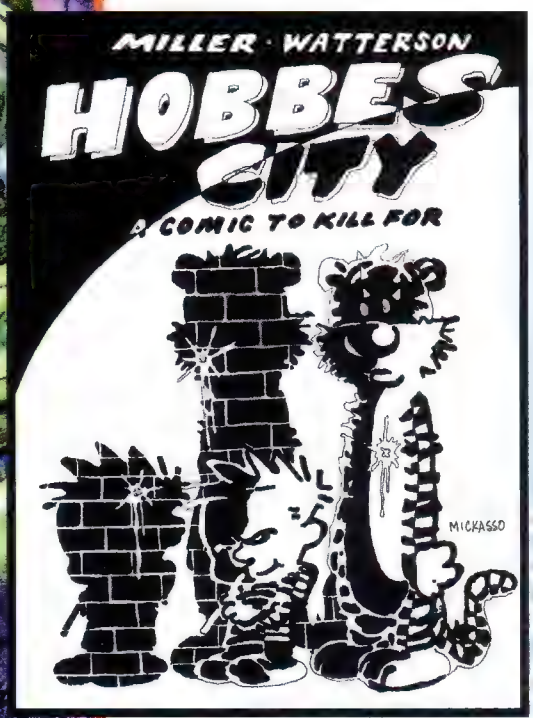
The 10 people whose artwork gets an honorable mention this month will receive an *X-Factor* #88 signed by Joe Quesada, a *Violator* #3 signed by Greg Capullo, and a *Silver Surfer* #50 signed by Ron Lim. The four runners-up will receive a *Spider-Man Unlimited* #1 signed by Ron Lim, a *Bloodstrike* #1 signed by Dan Fraga, and a Gold *WildStar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway. The artist of the winning entry this month will receive a *Spawn* #1 signed by Todd McFarlane, a *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1 signed by Buzz, a *Rune* #1 signed by Barry Windsor-Smith, and an *X-Men* (vol. 2) #28 signed by Andy Kubert. Congratulations to all!

Special thanks to Dynamic Forces for their generous donation of autographed comic books. You guys got the mott's!

1st Place!

JUDGE DREDD
By Edwardo Agostini
Vancouver, British Columbia, Cananda

CALVIN & HOBBES
By Mickasso
Seattle, WA



Judge Dredd ™ & © Fleetway Editions Ltd.

Calvin & Hobbes ™ & © Bill Watterson Sin City ™ & © Frank Miller.

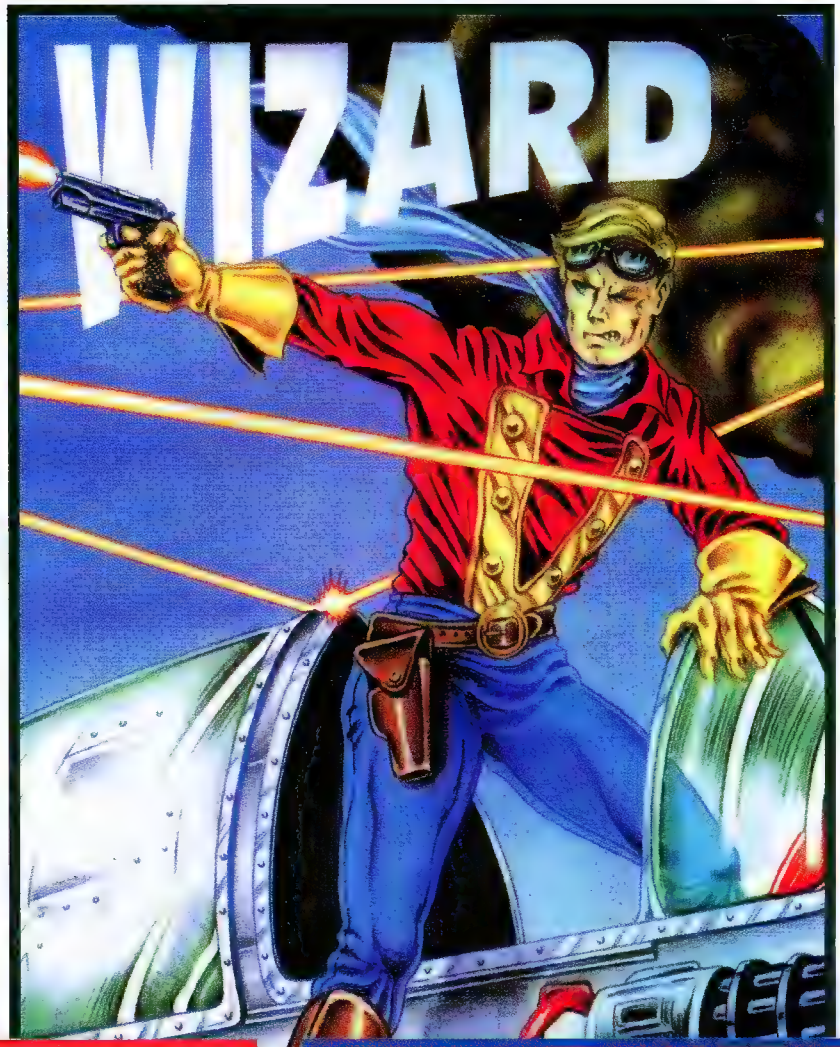
Airboy ™ & © Eclipse Enterprises Inc

RUNNER-UP

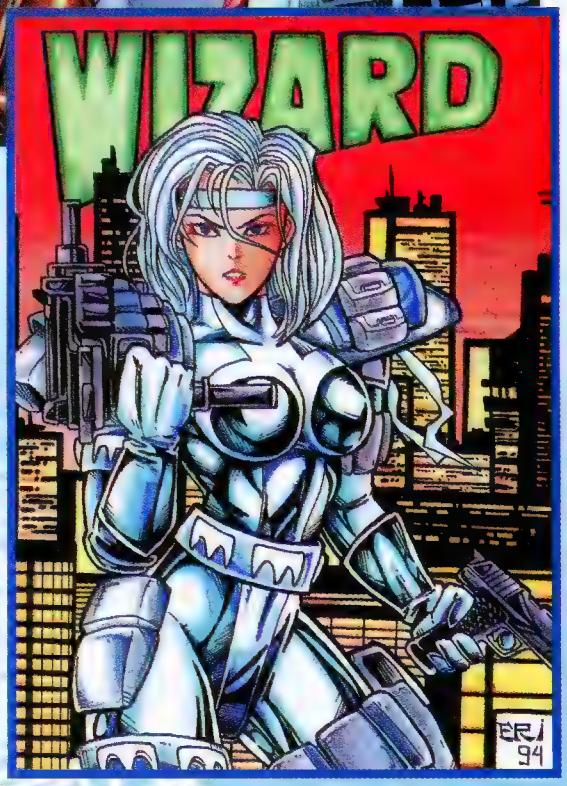
AIRBOY
By Mark Counts
Rainier, OR

DEATH & SANDMAN
By Roey Cancio
Quezon City, Philippines

SILVER SABLE
By Eri Lamuel & Adi Darda
Jakarta Timur, Indonesia



Death & Sandman ™ & © DC Comics



Silver Sable ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Spawn is a registered trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions Inc. Spawn © Todd McFarlane.

Solar ™ & © Western Publishing

Silver Surfer & Nova ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

SPAWN
By Moses Garcia
Burbank, CA

SOLAR
By Ryan Houser
Bloomington, IN

RUNNER-UP

SILVER SURFER & NOVA
By Denis LaPierre
Gradignan, France

RUNNER-UP

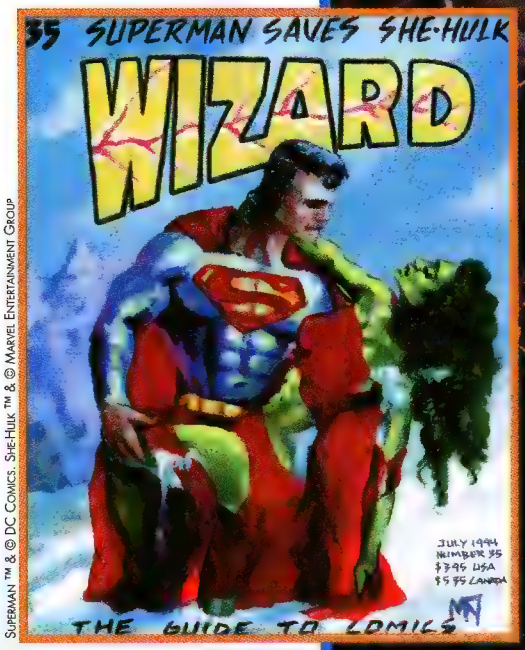
VIOLATOR & SPAWN
By Elf
Charlotte, NC

SUPERMAN & SHE-HULK
By Mark Dallmeier
Riverside, CA

NIGHTCRAWLER
By David Christian Garcia
Hope Mills, NC

VAMPIRELLA & SPAWN'S CAPE & CHAIN
By Yves St. Hubert
Miami, FL

Violator ™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions Inc.



Superman ™ & © DC Comics. She-Hulk ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Nightcrawler ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Vampirella ™ & © Harris Publications Inc.

Batman ™ & © DC Comics

RUNNER-UP

BATMAN
By Charles W. Bennett
Wytheville, VA

ZOAR, THE SORCERESS OF GREYSKULL
By John M. Tlustachowski
Commack, NY

BONE VS. THE FLAMING CARROT
By Izzy Sutton
Davenport, IA

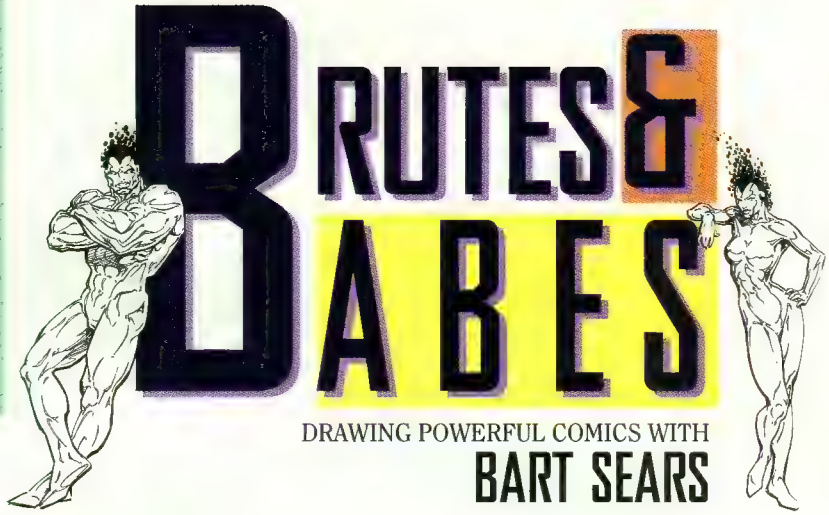
Zoar, The Sorceress of Greyskull ™ & © Mattel Toys Inc.

Bone ™ & © Jeff Smith. Flaming Carrot ™ & © Bob Burden.

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:
The Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

Hiya! Welcome once again to Brutes & Babes. Well, it's finally happened: I've dug myself out from under the mountain of entries in the latest, greatest B&B contest and have picked the winners. Believe me, that was no easy feat. Without further ado, here are...



THE SECOND MIGHTY *Brutes & Babes* ART CONTEST WINNERS!!!

Actually, let's take just a little more ado to see what this contest was all about.

1. All contestants had to pencil two pages based on the Batman/Man-Bat plot given in *Wizard* #28.

2. The art had to be done on an 11" x 17" piece of paper within a 10" x 15" border. No bleeds were allowed.

3. The pages had to be penciled; any that weren't were ineligible.

4. The contest entries had to be good-quality copies of the original pencils, and each page had to have the entrant's name, age, and address on it.

There were two age categories, under 13 and 13 and over. Only contestants' ages at the time they mailed their entries counted. The under-13 winners appear in Little Brutes & Babes this month. The grand prize for each category consists of an all-expense-paid trip to Syracuse, N.Y., to attend a private art class taught by yours truly! The second prize is a framed Man-Bat vs. Batman drawing by myself, personally autographed from me to the winners, and the third prize includes various comics and a Turok chromium card, all of which I signed. And now...

THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER!!!

Tony Manginelli, Age 26
Johnson City, Tenn.

Congratulations, Tony! Once again, this contest-judging thing was a terribly tough thing to do. All of the entries were really quite well done, and it was difficult to pick and choose from among them. Tony's storytelling is crisp and clear, the pencils are clean, the form and structure are solid, and the pages are easily inkable. Also, he followed the plot well, giving the writer what he wanted. On the negative side, some of the tags—obvious details between panels to help emphasize panel-to-panel flow—could have been stronger, and some of the left/right position switches of the characters could have been avoided, but neither of these problems really interfered greatly with the overall storytelling. Nice work, Tony; I can't wait to meet you. Congratulations again, and see you soon!

Brute & Babe ™ & © Bart Sears All artwork and characters ™ & © Bart Sears unless otherwise noted.
Text © Bart Sears. Batman & Man-Bat ™ & © DC Comics.

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

Andy Park, Age 18
Los Angeles, Calif.

As you can see, Andy did a bang-up job; I especially liked panel three on page one; it's crisp and clean and clear! Nice storytelling, good flow, and good work throughout in keeping Batman mostly on the left-hand side of the page and moving and looking right. Good background detail and solid use of blacks. On the negative side, the harsh angle switch between panels one and two on page one was slightly confusing, and showing Man-Bat in panel two looking down at Bat's silo (aka silhouette) sort of lets the cat out of the bag for page two. On page two, the tags could have been stronger; also, a little more background detail would have strengthened the believability of the scene. Very nice job, Andy; you're off to a great start!

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Beethoven "Toybits" Bunagan, Age 24
Manila, Philippines

Great job, Toybits! Interesting layouts and good storytelling combined with a strong use of blacks made this an excellent entry. The basic form was fairly solid and the action was dynamic; stuff really moved on these pages! The finished rendering was a little rough in some areas, and in some places the lack of a straightedge was a problem. Also, the panel design for page one was slightly confusing; the negative white space between panels one, three, four, and five really draws your eye. Outstanding job, Beethoven; keep up the good work!

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Zac Convey, Age 19
Northglenn, Colo.

Zac has given us a cleanly penciled piece with a good use of blacks throughout. The angles on the views are also very dramatic. Zac, you need to make sure we can locate where the characters are throughout the story. For instance, is it really Man-Bat in front of the moon at the beginning, and where does Batman start out in relation to the museum? You've got good stuff here, Zac; keep it up!

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Marty Edwards, Age 30
Greencastle, Ind.

"Lots of detail" describes Marty's drawings. The textures on everything are nicely done, and the Man-Bat at the end looks ready to roll. Some of the rendering was a little rough and overdone. Also, watch the first three panels on the second page: the action they contain is a little hard to follow. Overall, there's some good work here, Marty.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Ed Kotlan, Age 24
New Berlin, Wis.

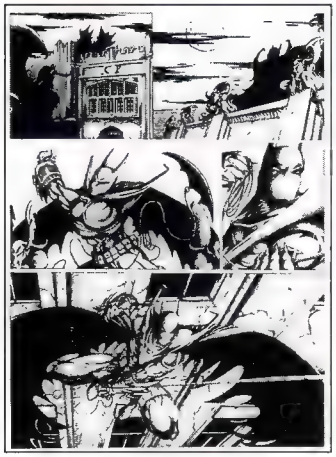
The angles in all of Ed's shots are exciting, and the drawing is very crisp and clean. The action shots are dramatic, but watch the perspective on some of them, Ed. I should mention that you don't want to change the main character's costume when you're drawing him; it's important that when you get an assignment, you carefully stick to what you are supposed to do. Individual initiative is looked for and admired, but when you make changes, they had better be the right ones or your editor will nail you every time. (I say this for everyone's benefit. Be careful.) Great job and keep going full steam, Ed.

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

Lewis LaRosa, Age 15
Marietta, Ga.

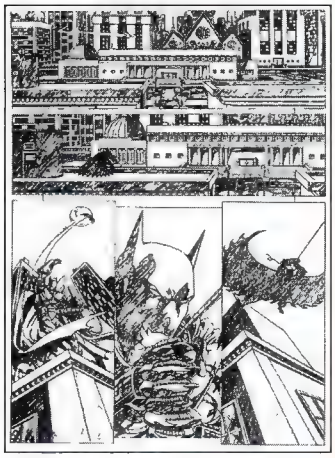
Lewis has created a really interesting-looking piece, especially because of the angles and the powerful use of blacks. Some of the storytelling needs some work, though. In the second frame of the first page, it's unclear if this is Batman viewing Man-Bat or just a look at Man-Bat after landing on the building. Also, on page two, I know that you intended Man-Bat to fly back onto the edge of the roof right after Batman threw him off, but you need to make it clear that he hasn't landed on a different building. You have some great things developing here. Keep working at it and you'll only get better! Best of luck, Lewis!

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE REST...



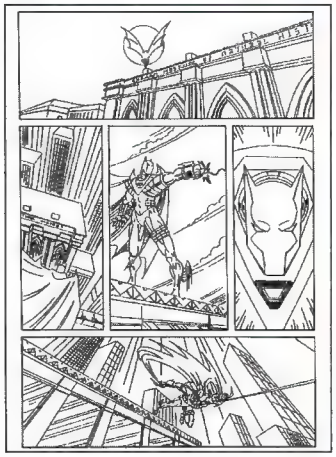
Christopher Meeks, Age 21
Hot Springs, Ark.

Christopher's style is nice and moody, and very illustrative. He did tons of work here. Watch out for the little tick lines that you've added for detail, Christopher; they are everywhere and have the effect of making everything appear to have the same texture, which isn't the case in real life. Metal should look like metal, cloth like cloth, skin like skin, and so on. Strengthen up your storytelling and you'll have some nice stuff to show off. Very compelling work, Christopher.



D. Malachi Penney, Age 23
Goffstown, N.H.

Again, lots of details appear in this sequence, along with a nice and powerful ending shot of Man-Bat. You obviously put a great deal of work into this piece. There are some things you want to be careful of, though. The background buildings in the third and fifth panels of page one should stay the same instead of changing. Also, people like to read (and look) from left to right, then top to bottom. The last three panels on page two are set up so that the reader will probably want to skip panel five and lunge right on to six. Make it clearer, and keep up this impressive caliber of material!



Daniel DeAngelo, Age 25
De Land, Fla.

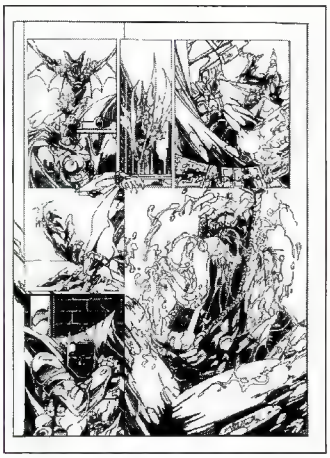
I included both the original pencils (right) and the inks (left) of Daniel's work to illustrate a point: Daniel's inks are very powerful and leap off the page at you, but the pencils seem to lack this vibrancy and power. This would have been a strong contender for top dog if the assignment were for inks, but the lack of rendering in the pencils simply doesn't stand up. The storytelling is very clear, and you seem to have a strong command of perspective and form; you have a lot of talent, Daniel. One thing to note: Daniel did the inks himself, but if somebody else had done them, they would probably look significantly different. Keep up this great stuff, Daniel!

Philip Postma, Age 20
Carleton Place, Ontario, Canada

Philip's piece has a very interesting look and style; however, it was in full inks, and so was not eligible for the contest. I would have liked to have seen the pencils for this. Watch the border breaks where they aren't necessary, Philip, mostly because they weaken your storytelling, and make sure we can always tell exactly where the characters are at all times. You've got darn good art going here, Philip—keep it up!

Jeff Galbraith, Age 17
California

Again, we can see some good stuff, but done in full inks. Although Jeff provided some pencils, the copies were very light, and what I could make out seemed very unfinished, so much so that they really couldn't be judged. Jeff has an interesting style, and good poses and gestures are strewn throughout. The only major problem is that things are somewhat unclear as far as what we're looking at and from what angle. I like the rolling Batman at the bottom of page one, but clear up what's happening and separate objects with your rendering. All in all, Jeff, you've got a fantastic start!



CLOSING:

Well, there you have it: the winners and best of the rest of the 13-and-over category for the Second Mighty Brutes and Babes Art Contest, featuring Batman vs. Man-Bat! Everyone that entered did a really terrific job, and I'm only sorry that I don't have more space to print more of them; there really were so many good ones. I appreciate all of the entries that I received; it's encouraging for me to see that so many of you have so much interest in comics and the Brutes & Babes column. Congratulations to all who had the drive and the guts to enter! All right, let's take a look at the under-13 class and see how they did...

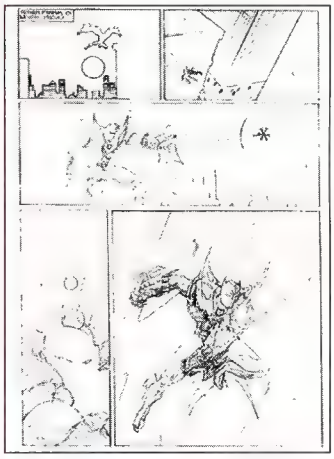
Little BRUTES & BABES

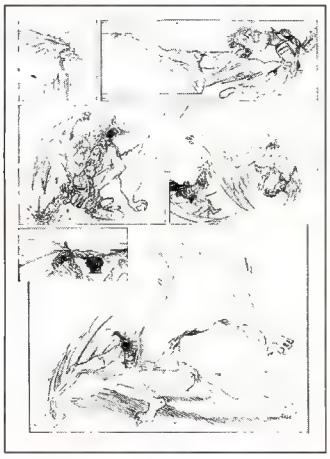
The contest continues, the stakes are high, and the smell of tension fills the air. We had a lot of entries in this age group, and everyone did a fantastic job. Here are the best under-13 contestants!

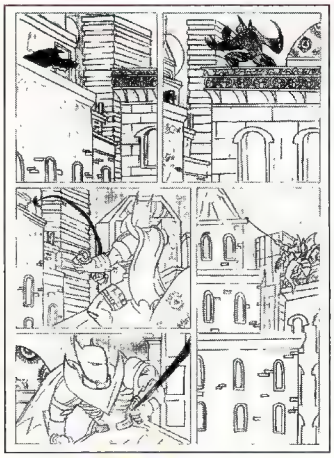
THE GRAND PRIZE WINNER!!!

Alec Joler, Age 12
Lawrence, Kan.

Here we get to see some great stuff from Alec. Alec obviously spent a great deal of time on these pages, and it really shows. The shot of Man-Bat at the end is very powerful, as is panel one of page two, with the silhouette of Batman against the night sky. Also, we get another nice shot of Batman in the last panel of page one. The detail on the roof vent on page two is something that adds to both the overall appearance and believability of the drawing. There's a nice flow throughout, and the action sequence on page two is really outstanding. Your rendering is clean and crisp, Alec. Overall, I would have liked to have seen you put more detail into the drawings than you did; there seemed to be a little too much flat black and not enough building detail. If you can add it in, I say do so! Also, work on your perspective and figure drawings; they'll only get better as time goes on. Remember to keep on drawing, because drawing means learning. Great job, Alec; congratulations and I'll see you soon!







SECOND PRIZE WINNER

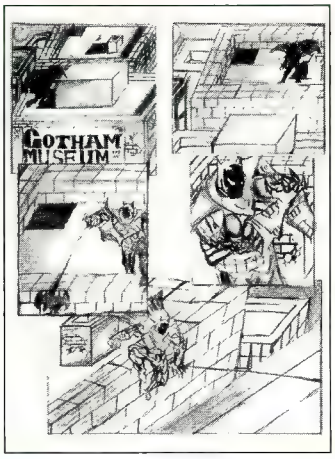
Scott Waddell, Age 12
Sorrento, Fla.

Scott has a nice, simple style that he carries off rather well. His details on the buildings especially add to the atmosphere and the setting of the story. The storytelling in general is very clear. The only thing that you want to be careful of is the movement from panel to panel. As I said before, people want to look from left to right and top to bottom, and that's the way they will naturally glance without some sort of guidance. At the bottom of page one, Scott, you ask the reader to look downward from panel three to panel four, then back up to panel five, and you have the same type of setup on page two. The reader will try to skip from panels three to five and then glance at four after realizing the mistake. Make sure you keep this clear, and your art will only get better. Excellent work on this one, Scott! Keep practicing!

THIRD PRIZE WINNERS

Marcus Thiele, Age 12
Knoxville, Tenn.

This artwork by Marcus shows many strengths, particularly in panel design and action. The panels are exciting. Also, the action scenes are vivid and exciting. The final shot of Man-Bat is really powerful. Good work, Marcus! However, the inset frame in the last panel of page two is confusing. You want to be careful that insets are clearly separated from the main panel and not confused with it. Also, the action in panel five of page one is unclear. Batman is apparently running along a roof, but it's difficult to follow. Some powerful work, Marcus, filled with potential. Just keep practicing! Congratulations and best of luck!

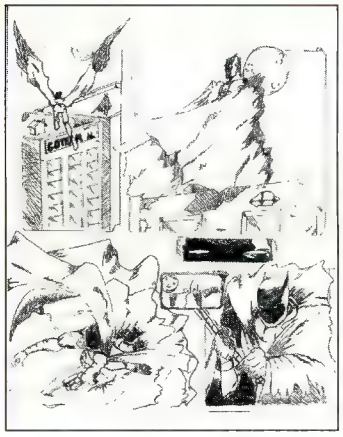


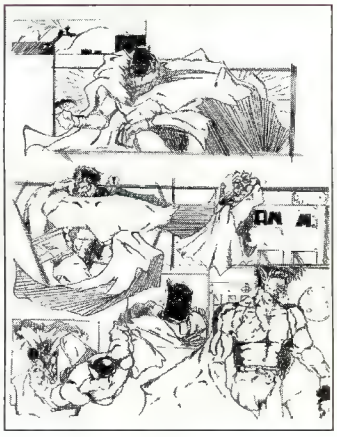
Virak Seng, Age 12
Long Beach, Calif.

Virak's pages contain strong work and demonstrate potential. Particularly interesting is the use of detail in the background, particularly the bricks and broken windows and the establishment date for the museum. All of these things make it come alive for the reader. Also, the storytelling was clear throughout the pages. Your pencils were a little rough, though, Virak; they should be tightened up. And you should watch the panel layouts on page one and try to avoid the empty space between panels. You only get a certain amount of space, so don't waste it! Otherwise, Virak, work on perspective and body proportions. Your stuff looks great—keep working hard at it!

Nadjib Assani, Age 12
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Nadjib has put a great deal of work into these pages, and they really stand out because of the clean pencils and the interesting panel layouts. Also, the layout within each panel is very interesting. The biggest thing that I want to point out is that the panels have to be very clear as far as what they represent. Some of your panels are placed in between other panels, Nadjib, and I can't tell which ones to look at first. Make sure you focus on what goes into each panel, not how to make any particular panel stand out or be different. Once you've mastered what goes into each panel, then you can start to really liven things up with some bizarre panel arrangements. All you need is practice, so do so as much as possible, Nadjib! Keep up the good work!





And congratulations to the other two under-13 third place winners:

Steven Young (age 12), from North Weymouth, Mass., and **Reid Johnson** (age 12), from Wailuku, Hawaii!

CLOSING:

Well, the Second Mighty Brutes and Babes Art Contest is finally history. Once again, I would like to thank everyone who entered, and what the hey, let's just thank everyone who regularly reads this lovely column. Please don't be upset if your work wasn't printed here; there's only so much space, and everything has to be judged based on the printed rules. Keep plugging away at it and keep sending stuff in. The more you draw, the better you will become!!! Best of luck and health to all, and remember: keep drawing!

WIZARD CONTEST

Win the Ark of the Covenant!

ACTUALLY, THAT'S A LIE. WHAT YOU *CAN* WIN, THOUGH, IS SOMETHING PRETTY CLOSE: JIM LEE'S DRAWING TABLE! YES SIR, THE VERY SAME TABLE JIM LEE SAT AT WHILE DREAMING UP ALL OF HIS COOL FREAKIN' CHARACTERS CAN BE YOURS. "HOW?!?" YOU ASK, SWEAT GLISTENING FROM YOUR FOREHEAD, HANDS CLENCHED INTO TREMBLING FISTS. HEY, RELAX, FANBOY, WE'LL GET TO THAT IN A MINUTE. FIRST, LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT TABLE...

Grand Prize (One winner):

YES SIR, THIS HERE IS THE DRAWING TABLE, BELONGING (FOR THE TIME BEING, ANYWAY) TO THE ONE, THE ONLY, THE KING OF STING, THE MASTER OF DISASTER, JIM "WILDC.A.T." LEE! AND, JUST TO KEEP YOU BUSY AND OUT OF TROUBLE, WE'RE THROWING IN A SET OF ART SUPPLIES, A CRITIQUE OF YOUR CONTEST SUBMISSION (WHAT SUBMISSION? SEE THE OTHER PAGE, BUDDY), AND A COPY OF *WILDC.A.T.S* #13 SIGNED BY JIM.

ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT.

Second Prize (Two winners):
A set of art supplies and a copy of *WildC.A.T.s* #13 (that's the last issue Jim is doing before he goes away, you know) signed by Jim Lee.

Third Prize (Five winners):
A copy of *WildC.A.T.s* #13 (yes, this is still the last issue Jim is doing before he goes away) signed by Jim Lee.

SO HOW DO YOU ENTER THIS AWESOME CONTEST? FAIRLY SIMPLE. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS PICK YOUR FAVORITE WILDC.A.T.S CHARACTER (GOOD GUY, BAD GUY, WE DON'T CARE), AND SHOW US YOUR ART SKILLS BY DRAWING THAT CHARACTER IN AN ORIGINAL POSE. WE'LL LOOK THROUGH ALL THE ENTRIES FOR THE MOST ORIGINAL AND WELL-DONE ILLUSTRATIONS, AND AWARD THOSE AMAZING PRIZES TO THE ARTISTS!

ALL CONTESTS HAVE RULES, SO... SUBMISSIONS CAN BE ON ANY FORM OF UNLINED PAPER OR POSTERBOARD, AND CAN BE IN ANY MEDIUM (OILS, CRAYON, LINE ART, BLOODY FINGER, ETC.). NEON INKS WILL NOT PRINT. ARTWORK MUST NOT BE LARGER THAN 8" X 11-1/4". DO NOT FOLD, BEND, OR ROLL ARTWORK. MAIL FLAT TO AVOID DAMAGE. BE SURE TO ENCLOSE THE ENTRY FORM. BEST O' LUCK!

THAT'S RIGHT—SINCE I'M GOING ON SABBATICAL, I WON'T BE NEEDING MY ART TABLE ANYMORE. GOOD LUCK, AND REMEMBER: WATCH THE WILDC.A.T.S CARTOON OR I'LL KICK YOUR BUTT.

Legal Stuff

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Homage Studios, their immediate families, and that McFarlane fella. *Spawn* sells like a billion copies a month; let Todd buy his own drawing table if he wants one. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and attach the form or card to the back of your artwork. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Jim's Table Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Hmm, first Liefeld goes on a sabbatical, then Jim Lee. Them Image guys are up to something. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be judged on originality and art quality by members of the *Wizard* staff. The judging will be conducted on November 1, 1994.

For the names of the winners, available after November 25, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Jim's Table Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

WINNERS

Congratulations to the winners of *Wizard* #35's Prophet Contest!

Answer: 167 shells

Grand Prize Winner
Andy Milien (age 15) New York, NY

Second Prize Winners
Kevin Griffin (age 16) Ward Cove, AK
Chad M. Halsey (age 24) E. Lansing, MI
Eric Moore (age 15) Dallas, TX
Christopher Stine (age 28) Harrisburg, PA
Travis Valle (age 17) Spokane, WA

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Prophet Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064 for a complete list of winners.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM! YOUR DEADLINE'S OCTOBER 31,1994!

HEY, IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE, EVERYONE WILL HATE YOU. BETTER HURRY.

WHAT THEN? SIMPLE. FILL OUT THE COUPON HERE, ATTACH IT TO THE BACK OF YOUR ARTWORK, STICK EVERYTHING IN AN ENVELOPE, SLAP A STAMP ON IT AND SHIP IT OFF TO:

Jim's Table Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY
10920-2064

CONTEST

Jim's Table Contest

I am:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) AGE

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

FAVORITE *WildC.A.T.S* CHARACTER (WE JUST WANT TO KNOW)

CUT & PRINT

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

BY DAVE GALVAN

SHAFT ™ & © ROB LIEFELD INC.

Inquiring minds want to know: will we see the Youngblood cartoon on the small screen anytime soon?

EXTREME PREJUDICE

On June 15, the Los Angeles Superior Court denied a lawsuit by Extreme Studios filed against Roustabout, the former animators of the Youngblood cartoon. Extreme filed the suit in May, claiming ownership of over 2,000 animation cels and master tapes from the Youngblood footage that has been made thus far by Roustabout. The Youngblood court saga seems far from over, however: in a move that might block the cartoon's airing on Fox, Roustabout is suing Extreme.

Last fall, Extreme and the newly formed Roustabout announced a partnership to produce *Youngblood*. Roustabout refused a "work-for-hire" relationship and insisted on sharing ownership, profits, and physical materials, including the cels and master tapes.

The Youngblood cartoon was originally being considered for broadcast by CBS. During the development process with the network, two animated shorts were made. "There was a minute short, and then there was a three-and-a-half minute short," says Liefeld. "I did all of the storyboards on the minute short because [Roustabout] didn't have time and they had to be limited in what we had to portray as far as figure motion."

A company in Korea, A-1 Studios, animated the longer short. "When we got that back—I still remember the night—the director from A-1, a guy named Ka Moon [Song], walked off the plane, and we went to a small projector and looked through a little viewfinder. The guys from Roustabout were surprised; all of the reshoots had been tagged on the end. They just had to be edited in on the video."

But Youngblood creator Rob Liefeld broke off negotiations with CBS because of the changes it wanted to make in the show. He was able to take this action because he'd developed the cartoon with over $800,000 of his own money. "I was new to the animation process; I was completely new," Liefeld says. "But I'm also a very fast learner, and I learned very quickly the process in which animation gets done. I had to; it was my money that was on the line."

However, the breakup with CBS boded ill for the Youngblood show. "About a week after that, the whole Roustabout alignment we had forged kind of went by the wayside," Liefeld says. "When it came time to make the hard decisions, they were very scared of what was before them—setting up an animation studio, and fear of being blacklisted. Fear motivated them the entire time. I believe that they became so scared of what was going to happen to them if they failed that it paralyzed them, and they were not able to go forward."

"The best thing that came out of this whole process is that I met Ka Moon and his A-1 Studios," Liefeld adds. "They con-

Looks like Zen is looking forward to his big-screen debut in late-'95.

tacted me immediately afterwards and we continued to develop this. Now the whole project is over at Fox." (A-1, incidentally, is the overseas animation studio for the upcoming *WildC.A.T.s* cartoon.)

Roustabout claims that it was given half of the rights to the Youngblood cartoon and that Liefeld can't do a thing without its say-so. It's currently countersuing Extreme for compensatory and punitive damages. According to Roustabout lawyer Stephen F. Rohde, "One of the reasons we took this case was to see to it that the abuse of the 'work-for-hire' doctrine that was so prevalent in the comic book business did not spread to animation."

Roustabout alleges that, although Liefeld often claims to have the best interests of the artists at heart, when confronted with animators who asserted ownership to their work, Liefeld reacted by claiming all rights for himself.

Fox wants to develop *Youngblood* like it did *The Tick*: order four episodes and then, if it likes the show, produce a total of 13 episodes as a mid-season replacement. "They're talking about *Youngblood* airing in early '95," says Liefeld.

Liefeld is currently finalizing a development deal with Fox for a live-action Saturday-morning Badrock series. He hopes to use the giant Badrock costume with the animatronic face that has been seen at conventions to sell Fox on the idea.

FILM

Michael Keaton definitely won't return as the Dark Knight. Citing creative differences with director Joel Schumacher and Warner Bros.—it's rumored that Warner didn't want to pay Keaton the reported $15 million he wanted—the actor abandoned the role of the Dark Knight. There are published reports that Keaton is talking to associates about playing a villain in a future *Batman* sequel.

Who will take up the mantle of the Bat? Val Kilmer, whose portrayal of Jim Morrison in the film *The Doors* was eerily accurate, has signed on. In fact, Kilmer signed a three-picture deal with Warner Bros.—he'll play Batman in at least two more movies if *Batman Forever* warrants a sequel.

Kilmer's casting throws a monkey wrench in the plans to have Rene Russo as Bruce Wayne's love interest, because the producers feel she is too old for the younger Kilmer. Russo has starred in *Lethal Weapon 3* and *In the Line of Fire*, and if you have a really good memory you'll remember her in *Sable*, a short-lived TV series in the mid-'80s based on Mike Grell's comic series *Jon Sable, Freelance*. With Russo out, several other actresses were considered as replacements, including Sandra Bullock (*Speed*), Linda Hamilton (*Terminator 2*), and Elle MacPherson (*Sirens*), but the winner is Nicole Kidman. This star of *Dead Calm*, *Days of Thunder*, and *Malice*, who is also known as Mrs. Tom Cruise, has officially signed on as Batman's main squeeze.

Batman Forever, which will start shooting in September, is set to star Tommy Lee Jones as Harvey Dent, the district attorney Billy Dee Williams played in the first Batfilm. In this movie, Dent becomes Two-Face and hires the Riddler, aka Jim Carrey (*The Mask*), to take care of Batman. Carrey replaced Robin Williams, who supposedly didn't think the part was big enough and turned it down just before the contract with Warner Bros. was finalized. Twenty-four-year-old Chris O'Donnell (*Scent of a Woman*, *The Three Musketeers*) will play Robin, the Boy Wonder.

Rumors are flying that Kenneth Branagh (*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Dead Again*) has been pegged to portray a young Ben "Obi-Wan" Kenobi in the new *Star Wars* trilogy planned by producer George Lucas. Neither Lucasfilm nor Branagh would confirm these rumors.

New Line Cinema says it plans on giving the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles a facelift in their next film outing. Although few specifics were disclosed, the normally 16-year-old Turtles will age into older teenagers. They will be redesigned by creators Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird.

Filming on *Zen, Intergalactic Ninja* will start in December for a late-'95 release. This live-action motion picture will be produced by Sceneries Entertainment, best known for artsy style films from Europe. Zen's origin will be revealed in the film, but a major enemy has yet to be chosen. No director has been signed, but according to Zen co-creator Steve Stern, negotiations are under way with a major Hollywood director best known for his campy horror movies. Speculation tags either John Carpenter or Wes Craven.

Jan DeBont (*Speed*) has signed on as director of Tri-Star's *Godzilla* remake. Reportedly, DeBont has an almost unlimited budget for the '95 release, and the script, by Terry Rossio and Ted Elliott, has Godzilla saving the Earth from (groan) aliens.

Francis Ford Coppola recently took time out from editing *Frankenstein* to scout Europe for locations for his next feature, a live-action *Pinocchio*. Coppola feels that Hollywood is a little too plastic, and has been looking for animation studios in Europe to help depict the moment when Pinocchio experiences sadness for the first time.

And hey, didja see Marvel Publisher Stan Lee in the prison breakout scene in Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*?

Why are these people smiling? Maybe because the *Zero Hour* saga didn't affect them one bit. And they're back next season, too.

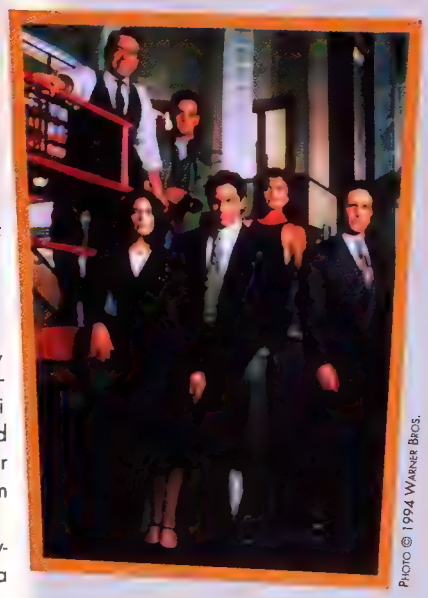


PHOTO © 1994 WARNER BROS.

ZEN, INTERGALACTIC NINJA ™ & © ZEN COMICS INC. *LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN* ™ & © DC COMICS.

TELEVISION

Expect a few changes next season on *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*. The producers have caved in to comic book fans' requests and will be adding more villains, although the show will still focus on relationships more than battles. Famous actors will probably appear as heavies. Beverly Johnson, who played Lex Luthor's assistant in last season's two-part finale, will be back. James Earl Jones may return as the owner of *The Daily Planet*.

In the meantime, *Lois and Clark's* Dean Cain and Tracy Scoggins are both keeping busy over the summer by taping appearances on *American Gladiators* that will air this fall.

CBS will probably air an animated cartoon series based on the movie *The Mask* as a mid-season replacement in January. The cartoon will be a bit lighter than the movie, for more-than-obvious reasons. Rumor has it that Jim Carrey himself just might do the voice. Stay tooned for more details.

In November, the two syndicated Hercules TV movies will be rerun, along with three original movies. Released under the umbrella title of *The Legendary Journeys of Hercules*, the series is produced by Sam Raimi and Robert Tapert, who brought you such films as *The Evil Dead* and *Darkman*. This show, part of MCA/Universal's syndicated "Action Pack" series, is very different from past Hercules movies.

THE MASK ™ & © DARK HORSE COMICS

If there was to be a Mask animated series, voiced by Jim Carrey, we would probably say the same thing. *Ssssmokin'!*

"After *Animal House*, it's hard to have people don togas without looking stupid!" says Tapert. "Our Hercules is not the traditional muscleman. There are a million other guys in the world who are bigger than him, but he can take a thousand guys one at a time."

Set in a mythical land where gods and demons run freely, Hercules takes the side of the much-abused mortals. Half human and half god, he helps those who need him. "It's very different than anything anyone's thought about when they thought 'Hercules,'" adds Tapert.

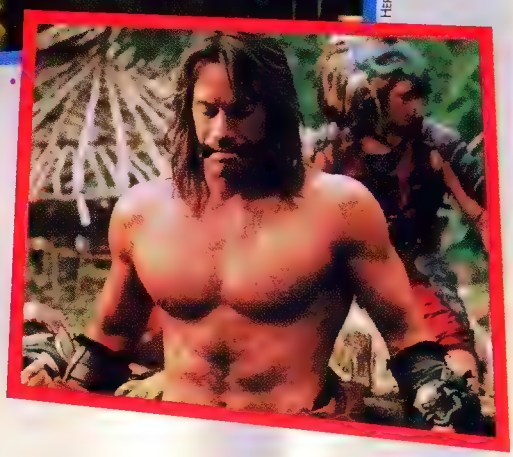
That's for sure. The excitement level is higher and the special effects are better than in any other Hercules film ever made. The first two-hour movie is *Hercules and the Amazon Women*, and the second is *Hercules and the Lost Kingdom*. Legendary actor Anthony Quinn plays Hercules's father Zeus.

"Out of the first two, the first one is more for a *Terminator* audience; the second one is more for a *Princess Bride* audience," says Tapert. He has high praise for the acting skills of Kevin Sorbo, who plays Hercules.

"We have a mini-arch over these first five movies where he meets various women, then he meets a woman for three of them played by Tawny Kitaen [*The New WKRP, America's Funniest People*], who will be his wife," Tapert adds.

The first two movies did so well that the show has been picked up as a syndicated series. In January '95, when "Action Pack" ends, *Hercules* and another show called *Vanishing Son*—a rip-off of the movie *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* by the very people who did *Dragon*—will air back to back. Then, once every four months, a two-hour movie pilot will air. If that does well, it might spin off into further series. ☆

HERCULES AND THE AMAZON WOMEN ™ & © MCA TV



Above: Anthony Quinn as Zeus and Kevin Sorbo as Hercules. "Son, just because I'm the almighty Zeus doesn't mean I can solve all your female problems. I mean, c'mon, you call being held captive by beautiful women a problem?"

Dave Galvan is a Portland, Ore.-based freelance writer who specializes in the entertainment industry.

Whoever Dies With The Most Toys WINS!

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ROBINS

Gen-erating Excitement

THE GEN13 PHENOMENON GROWS ON A FINE MIX OF POWERS, PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITY. CAN IT GET ANY BIGGER? BRANDON CHOI, J. SCOTT CAMPBELL AND ALEX GARNER THINK SO.

By Andrew Steven Harris

Imagine, for a moment, a book produced by Image with virtually no fight scenes. Now add a handful of heroes in regular clothes, panels chock full of interpersonal character dialogue, and an art team that doesn't include one of the company's fan-favorite founding members.

If you can visualize this, then you've got the hottest single issue Image has ever produced in its entire publishing history.

Image Comics, through Jim Lee's WildStorm studios, rolled the dice on such a book, and came up Lucky 13: *Gen13*, that is.

The first issue of the runaway hit series, by writer Brandon Choi, penciler J. Scott Campbell and inker Alex Garner, has skyrocketed in value faster than any regular-edition comic book in Image's publishing history. The debut issue already fetches approximately $30 at stores, just a few short months since its release. It has already gone into a second printing. No other single Image issue has done that since *Youngblood* #1, which launched the company in 1992. The rest of the five-issue miniseries has met with resounding success as well, leading to an upcoming regular series.

"In the first issue, we took some very big chances," says Campbell, reflecting on the book's wildfire success. "We didn't have any costumes, the characters did a lot of talking, and there wasn't a whole lot of action. Halfway through drawing it, I actually thought, 'God, is this book going to bomb? Is this a boring book that's just going to sit on the shelves?' I knew it wasn't going to be a total failure, because it had Jim Lee's name on it and it was a spinoff book. But I had no idea it was going to be successful to this degree. I'm still shocked when I go to conventions and see the first issue go for $25 or $30, and it's only five months old. It's just wacky."

The book's unexpected success comes as a welcome reprieve after the unexpected setbacks prior to its release. In anticipation of the book's August 1993 release, Image debuted the team as part of the Image/Valiant *Deathmate* crossover, but then had to suddenly can-

cel the book when its original title, *Gen X*, conflicted with *Generation X*, the title trademarked by Marvel for its own new mutant series.

Gen X soon became *Gen13*, in reference to the 13th generation of Americans that the teens in the book represent. The creative team then had to comply with a new Image policy instituted during the interim, that was designed to combat the company's problems with chronic lateness. The policy requires a studio to complete several issues of a new series before it can solicit the first issue to comic book retailers. As a consequence, Campbell says, the first issue's release date was pushed back even further.

"We canceled the book originally to try it again with a new name," he says. "Also, when we originally solicited the book, Image was still working out the kinks in its system, and there were no rules on how we could go about soliciting the book. Jim [Lee] would just go to the editorial meeting and say, 'I'm going to solicit this new book,' and everyone else would just say 'OK.' But in the [meantime], a new rule came out that [said] two more books had to be finished before the first one could be solicited, because so many were coming out late."

When the new book finally appeared in retailer catalogues, the summer frenzy of 1993 had passed, retailers had cut back their shipments significantly, and orders for the new book tumbled to less than half of the original demand.

"When we first solicited the book as *Gen X*, the orders came in at about 400,000 to 500,000, and we thought that was pretty good," Campbell says. "But when we resolicited it as *Gen13* several months later, the orders dropped to 170,000. The market had completely changed. *StormWatch* #0 did 600,000, and at that time we were disappointed, because our books were selling a million each. Now we'd kill for those numbers."

The drop in orders, however, may have played a key role in the first issue's breakthrough success. With fewer copies available, the book suddenly became a hot commodity in the market. That kind of attention brought it to the notice of even more people, who themselves sought out the book, making it even harder to find.

Disregarding market forces, however, much of the title's success can be attributed to those things which make any comic book successful: a fresh new approach, coupled with dynamic, powerhouse storytelling.

"A little over a year ago, Jim and I were sitting around looking at all the different team books in the comic book universes, and we noticed that the last bunch of teens to star in their own book were the New Mutants, which came out in the early 1980s," says series writer and co-creator Brandon Choi. "Jim had just read this book, *Generation X* [by Douglas Coupland], and it piqued his curiosity. He thought it would be interesting to take a different twist, more geared toward teenagers and the younger crowd, which wouldn't be so heavy into this grim storytelling like the stuff coming out of *WildC.A.T.s*, *Youngblood*, or the other stuff coming out of Marvel or DC. Jim wanted to just take a step in the opposite direction, and start a new bunch of characters who go through that whole introductory phase [by] learning about their powers, [and] learning how to be a hero. We looked over DC's *Legionnaires*, since I loved that stuff and I love what they're doing there, and that kind of got the ball rolling."

Choi, a friend of Lee's since childhood—the two created comic books together in elementary school—began working on Lee's character designs with Campbell, whom Lee had discovered as part of the Homage Studios Talent Search. Campbell had only been at Lee's studio for two weeks, doing pinups and trading cards, when Lee gave him the chance to work on what would soon become the biggest project of his career.

"One evening," says Campbell, "Jim had some sketches in his portfolio, different characters for satellite books that would relate to *WildC.A.T.s*. The first one he pulled out had rough sketches of kids, kind of newborn characters who had just gotten their superpowers. The story would revolve around them discovering their powers, and I found that very appealing—I like doing stories with a younger attitude, something less cynical than what's normally out there.

"The sketches at first were very rough," Campbell explains. "Jim had only a couple of them thought out. They were just rough shapes with a list of names on the side of the page. But at the same time, Jim had the whole idea in his head. It turned out that he wanted a younger female to be a smart-aleck type of character. I had my own designs that I showed him, and that ended up becoming Freefall."

The rest of the characters, Campbell says, are all from Lee's concept, although Lee asked for feedback from the other creators and incorporated a number of their suggestions.

"Actually, it was really weird," says Garner. "We all went away for Christmas, thinking, 'Let's think of new ideas for this book.' Then when we got back, we found that our ideas were incredibly similar."

THE GEN-KIDS, FROM THE TOP DOWN: GRUNGE, FAIRCHILD, BURNOUT, FREEFALL, AND ON THE BOTTOM, RAINMAKER.

The book focuses on a group of five teenagers—Rainmaker, Freefall, Fairchild, Burnout, and Grunge—all of whom have unknowingly served as the subjects of covert government experiments to trigger superhuman powers in humans. The important truth the teens are trying to deal with is that they are the children of the Gen12 project, which performed genetic experiments on their parents, who then passed that genetic potential along to them.

Freefall, the fast-talking mall-teen of the bunch, can levitate herself and others. Burnout and Rainmaker provide two sides of the same coin: controlling fire and rain. Grunge is a tattooed biker-dude with martial arts moves,

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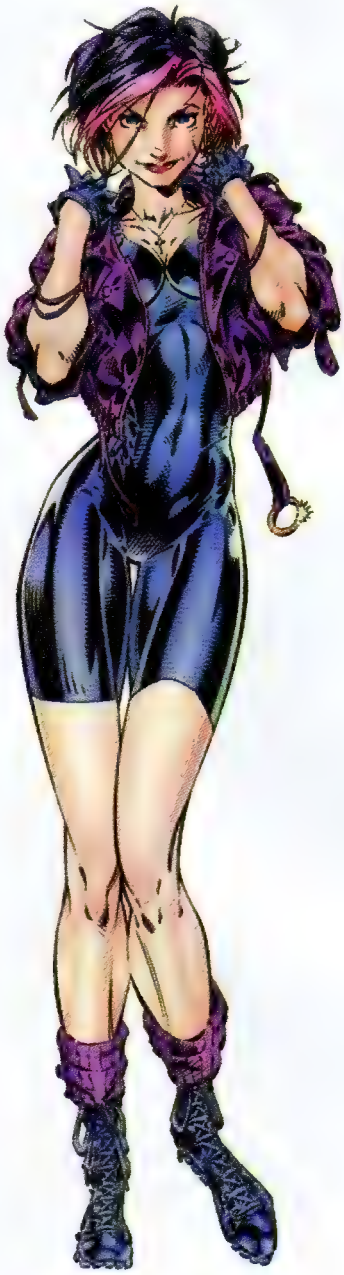
a healing factor, and the power of molecular transmutation. According to Choi, "The molecules in his body have the ability to alter their structure to match the composition of whatever material he is touching at the moment." Finally, Fairchild, the field leader for the team, is a Princeton University honors student who suddenly finds herself a whole lot stronger—and larger—than when she started her "internship" with the company. Acting as a sort of chaperone-from-Hell for the team is Lynch, the Gen12 government renegade who takes the teens under his dark wing.

"They're really a blend of different personalities, and they each represent a different personality trait," says Choi of the teenage stars. "In a way, if you could combine them, they would be one personality. Each has their own strong suits, each has their own weaknesses to build on. We all feel differently about them, too. Jeff [Campbell] likes Freefall and Grunge; Alex likes Burnout, and Fairchild is Jim's favorite. Me, I kind of like them all."

FREEFALL.



"Fairchild is more or less the brains of the whole unit," says Campbell, who co-plots the book with Choi. "She's the smartest, the tallest, the leader, and I have no problem with that...just like Grunge is an idiot, and I've got no problem with that, either. Rainmaker—now she's a little brighter than the rest of them, and overall some of them are smarter than they [appear] to be. But," he laughs, "Grunge is not going to pop out with anything intellectual any time soon."

Fairchild, as a character, is another roll of the dice for the WildStorm team. Conventional wisdom has told us that female characters in lead roles do not sell comic books. Fairchild is also one of the few characters in comic books today who does not use a code name in place of her real one, Caitlin Fairchild.

"I know it was a gamble. Everyone says female characters are tough to market with kids, that they don't make many women action figures, that their comics don't sell well," Campbell says. "But I didn't have any problem with her being the leader at all. I am pleasantly surprised with the success. I like drawing female figures, and I especially enjoy developing females as characters. It's stupid in this day and age to not have women more prominent in comics."

"When I look back at some of the stuff that we've done [at WildStorm]," says Choi, "I think we like to see women in strong roles—characters like Zealot, or Voodoo, who are equal to the male heroes. With Fairchild, she was the oldest, and that put her in the leadership position at that point. We weren't sure to keep her there, but with Lynch as their mentor, that creates an interesting conflict, and raises the issue of the young kids growing older and having to adapt to authority."

Lynch will indeed prove an unconventional and perhaps dark-edged mentor, since he's been traditionally cast in the role of a villain in previous WildStorm appearances, such as in the recent *Kindred* mini-series. It's been revealed that his son is among the next generation of superpowered teens; as to exactly which hero it is, that hasn't been disclosed yet. "Lynch's kid might be one of the kids frozen in stasis at the end of issue #5," Choi notes, hinting that the character might not be Burnout or Grunge, as fans suspect. As for Lynch, Choi adds, "He begins to re-evaluate his life; he's in sort of a 'mid-life crisis.'

"He's going to be a mystery element," continues Choi. "We have an idea of who he is, but there's a ten-year gap, and it's going to be interesting for him to go through that evolutionary process, become a leader and a mentor. He's got to learn to look at them as adults, but he knows that his son is among them also."

"Lynch emerges from [being] a villain to be the leader and mentor of Gen13," says Campbell. "He's such a dark, creepy character, and then here he is going to be involved with these fun-loving kids. It's going to be very interesting." By the end of issue #5, he and the group of youngsters are on the run from [his government organization] International Operations, which is now headed by the evil Ivana Baiul. Of course, they won't be able to stay away from I.O. for long, as Choi says: "Lynch still has connections to I.O., and Ivana has more Gen13 specimens; I'm sure they'll cross paths again."

Lynch's appearances in the *Kindred* mini-series also tie into the Gen12 experiments. Characters triggered by the experiments will also show up in the soon-to-be-released *Team 7* mini-series, which will explore the ramifications of the government's clandestine research.

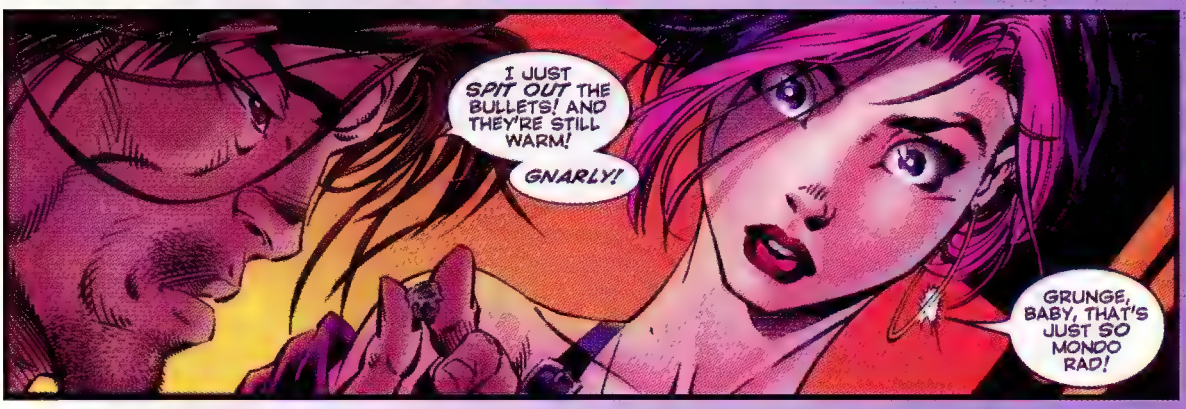
"*Team 7* interconnects with a lot of the WildStorm books," Campbell says. "The origin of a lot of characters ended up being in other books, but it has extensive influence on the WildStorm universe. [*Team 7* is] very well-connected with *Gen13* and *Kindred*. Characters like Lynch co-exist between the two different mini-series, and the connection stems from their connection with Team 7."

"The *Team 7* mini-series is like burning the candle at both ends," Choi states. "It's burning at both ends and coming toward the middle, where members of Team 7 resolve their storylines with some of the characters from Gen13." Choi notes that there are other superpowered children from the Gen12 project too, with whom the Gen13 kids clashed in issue #5 of their mini-series.

Despite these relationships, however, the creative team will try to keep the Gen13 kids insulated from the rest of the intense, quick-and-the-dead WildStorm universe. Occasional crossovers with other Image Universe characters outside of WildStorm's cast of characters will occur, such as Pitt's appearance in #3 and #4 of the mini-series. For the most part, though, the tone of the *Gen13* book will keep the storyline independent from the rest of the WildStorm portfolio.

"I don't want crossovers to be too much of a crutch," Campbell says. "The crossover with Pitt was a good way of insuring sales in the middle of the mini-series, but a lot of people were already saying how much they liked the book. I'm open to crossovers—I liked the one with Pitt a lot—but I wouldn't want a guest appearance saving the book.

"A crossover would most likely be with one of the other WildStorm books, and teams like StormWatch and WildC.A.T.s don't really need a bunch of teens running around any-



ABOVE: FREEFALL WATCHES AS GRUNGE DISCOVERS ONE OF HIS POWERS. RIGHT: BURNOUT MAKING THE MOST OF HIS PYROTECHNIC TALENTS.

way," he says. "I would like it if it made sense, and worked with the storyline, but there's nothing planned right now. With Image, there's a lot of spinoffs reacting with each other, and it kind of gets cluttered. I sometimes have to stop and ask myself, 'What book am I reading?' because I just saw this character in last week's book."

Choi notes that the regular *Gen13* series will eventually intersect with some *WildC.A.T.s* and *StormWatch* elements, as the Gen13 team deals with Lynch's past. The first six issues, which have already been planned out, confine the kids to their own quirky, independent adventures.

"The mini-series has tried to keep it more on a lighter note than the other titles, although it still got mixed in with government conspiracy, evil-government-in-the-background kind of stuff," Choi says. "For the regular series, Jeff wants to take it more on an eccentric note. He's a big adventure fan, [and enjoys films like] *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Star Wars*, and that sort of fare, and he wants to blend in more adventure [elements] with the superhero element. That will take the team around the globe and into space, to places where you wouldn't expect the rest of the [WildStorm] Universe to go."

"I've always talked to Jim about how I like to see the fun angle," Campbell says. "There's nothing wrong with big guns and evil organizations, but I wanted things the way they were in my comics when I grew up. Too many comics nowadays have the world ending every month. I want these guys to sometimes have problems that are not as big. Some monster in a shopping mall, something like that. It won't be goofy—we're not going to try to make it stupid—but there'll be more of a whimsical attitude, like stories with a mad scientist, more adventure-type stuff. More on the high adventure and action, less on the gore and violence."

And, Campbell notes, the regular series will be even more askew than both its unconventional predecessor and the company's other titles. "It's going to be even more different than the other WildStorm books when it comes out," Campbell says. "I had told Jim I wanted to do a story-heavy book, since I was frustrated with the way a lot of comics had been going: fight scene after fight scene, characters growling at each other, but nothing else really happening. I thought there was a market that could be tapped, giving people a storyline, building a fan base where you didn't have to throw action at them all the time. I'm not ragging on *WildC.A.T.s*, but we figured that's already being done; why do that again? Too much of one thing is always bad.

"We're hopefully going to have more eccentric villains, experiment a bit more, give the book more of its own look," Campbell adds. "When I draw the pages, I don't go, 'What's the formula that works, what's being done that I can do again?' I think, 'What can I do that I haven't seen yet?' I don't reference a lot from comics. I think of movies I've seen, but I don't simulate other comics. And I really try to develop the characters through the art, to try to make them interesting. I play a lot with expressions, I try to milk a lot of emotions. A lot of creators in comics don't make use of stuff like that, but it gets [readers] much more involved."

"I'm looking for what I grew up with in the movies that I saw," Choi says. "Jim and I have seen the same movies, read the same type of science fiction books, and that influenced a lot of what we wanted to do in comics. I think of *Lethal Weapon*, *Raiders*, and the *Star Wars* movies with a blend of action and science fiction. One of my favorite books when I was growing up was *Dune* [by Frank Herbert], with its epic scale. Jeff and I are both great fans of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg and the work they did on the Indiana Jones trilogy. I want to twist that into *Gen13* and give it an epic scale, but show a growth process for each of the characters. How some of them adapt to be teens, how some of them adapt to be heroes, and how some of them don't even choose to be heroes. I want to work in the parent-child relationships that are unresolved, tie in Gen13 with Team 7—their fathers—and explore that in future storylines."

"This is kind of fun," adds Garner. "You get tired of seeing these underground top-secret organizations who want to rule the world all the time. It gets a little old after a while, and this is much different."

As far as being different goes, *Gen13*'s creators may have something of a challenge when Marvel's somewhat-similar *Generation X* series begins in September. Both Choi and

Campbell have opinions about their upcoming competition.

Choi states, "I've liked the work that Scott Lobdell has done during his [writing] tenure on *Uncanny X-Men*, and look forward to this book coming out. I'd like to think that our two books will be attracting slightly different segments of the readership that may overlap to a certain degree. *Generation X*'s strength will, of course, come from its ties with the other X-titles, while *Gen13*'s strength is based on its links with the rest of the WildStorm Universe."

Regarding the subject of whether the market will allow, and even welcome, two similar teen team books, Choi comments, "When both regular series get rolling, I believe they'll each have a significant following. I think the readers will welcome any comic book title that's done well. In today's market, I think the operative word is 'quality' rather than 'teen'. As long as the story and artwork are good, the readers will appreciate having both books out on the market."

Campbell adds, "Though both are books that are 'teen'-oriented, I strongly believe that we're both going in separate directions with our projects. [Marvel's book] seems to be a lot more serious and dark, and far less comical and zany than ours...I'm more influenced by the young culture, period; what they dress like, what they watch, what they listen to. It also doesn't hurt that I'm 21 myself."

"It was never our intent to 'beat Marvel to the punch' when we started *Gen13*," Choi remarks. "In fact, Jim [Lee] first thought about doing this project nearly two years ago. At the time, there had been a lot of publicity about the Baby Boomers vs. the Generation X controversy, and this had caught his interest. He thought it'd be interesting to create a team of 'slacker' superheroes that would represent this younger generation of kids. At the time, though, we were in the middle of launching the *WildC.A.T.s* mini-series, and didn't have the time to develop the idea any further. It was a little over a year later, after Jeff Campbell and Alex Garner had arrived in the studio, that we finally had the time and the creative team to launch the title."

The *Gen13* creative team won't be creating situations with the express purpose of fighting off the competition. Campbell notes, "We have plans to do something totally different and off-the-wall because *that's what we want to do!*"

Choi confirms that the popular couple Freefall and Grunge will become more romantically involved. Campbell offers, "All I can say is that we are real excited about the plotlines and characters we've come up with so far. We have enough ideas to fill about 20 issues."

Readers will undoubtedly be thrilled with these ideas, as they have been for the past few months. "There's already been a great reader response to this book," Choi says. "Jim, Jeff, and I have appreciated the flood of letters we've received from our readers. While most of our storylines for the coming year have already been established, there will always be times when we can tweak or spin a story in such a way to take into account reader reaction to our work and the direction we may be taking."

The new regular series was initially slated to start at issue #6, much like several other WildStorm books which have continued on in numbering after the end of their mini-series. For *Gen13*, however, Image is considering restarting the series at #1, for various reasons. Among them is the fact that the new series will be a real departure from the mini-series, with new storylines, some new costumes, and several new villains. This means yet another delay in the series. As with the initial mini-series, Image's solicitations policy for new titles would force WildStorm to complete several issues before it could go ahead and solicit the first one.

"The hiatus will probably be more than three months," Campbell warns. "We may want to do another #1, and we're not trying to rook the fans or the retailers—the regular series will be very different in direction. The mini-series is the origin of the regular series. There'll be different costumes, and other stuff that's totally different from the mini-series, so a new #1 would make sense to us. But that would also mean that we have to get three issues done before we can solicit, and then it takes another three months after that before the issue gets from solicitations into the stores."

Still, the *Gen13* creative team shouldn't trouble itself too much with the notion of a negative reaction to a new #1. Even if the book is delayed somewhat by the decision, it shouldn't bother Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell, or Alex Garner very much. After all, their book was delayed the last time it started up, and look how things turned out. ☆

Andrew Steven Harris is a freelance writer in San Diego, Calif., who spends his spare time with his face buried in law books at his school's library, secretly reading mondo-rad copies of Gen13 *#1/2 and* The Maxx *#1/2.*

FREEFALL AND GRUNGE HAVE TAKEN A FANCY TO EACH OTHER...

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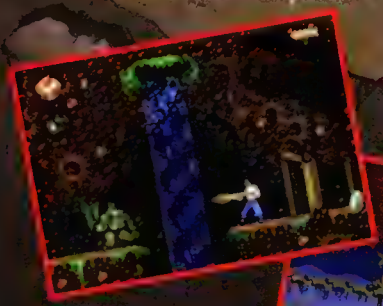

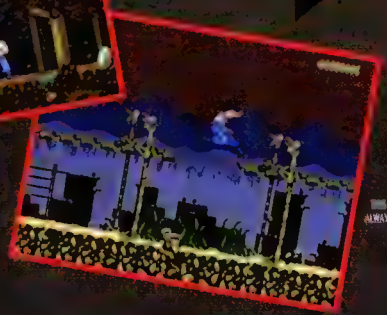

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Despite solid storytelling, top-flight talent, and on-time delivery, the culturally diverse offerings of MILESTONE MEDIA continue to be one of comics' best kept secrets.

The Milestone Men (from left): Derek T. Dingle, Dwayne McDuffie, and Denys Cowan.

Below: The residents of the Milestone Universe.

Photo courtesy Milestone Media

Fresh from the critical and popular success of its "Worlds Collide" summer crossover with DC Comics, Milestone Media is stepping up its campaign to reach mainstream America. The effort will include a newsstand magazine for kids, licensed apparel, a publicity campaign, and possibly other entertainment vehicles. Having recently launched its second flight of monthly books, the company is also cooking up a host of mini-series, posters, and possibly some trade paperbacks.

Now if it could only generate a little attention from direct-market comic book retailers.

"I have been completely surprised by the resistance our books have received from the direct market," says Denys B. Cowan, creative director for Milestone. "I thought there would be some resistance, but I also thought that our idea would have appeal. I didn't expect the scale of resistance we've seen. Having been in the comics field for 20 years, it's frustrating."

"I was blindsided, I was shocked," Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone's editor-in-chief, agrees. "I guess I was kind of naïve. [Denys and I] were doing *Deathlok* for Marvel in 1991, and sales were about 290,000. I figured Milestone wouldn't do Marvel numbers, but I thought we'd get everyone's attention."

Fans and retailers in the direct market, Cowan adds, "are resistant to anything they perceive as different. If you do cookie-cutter versions of the same things, they snatch them up, because they understand them." If readers were to take a closer look at Milestone, he suggests, they'd see a superhero universe only slightly different from the ones they're used to. "We may have a new perspective, but basically we're still talking about capes and powers and cool stories. That's been overlooked."

Milestone President Derek T. Dingle has a theory about why the company may not be getting its due. He feels the problem stems from the initial media focus on the multicultural backgrounds of Milestone's creators and characters.

"Readers felt our multicultural thrust would be too alien to them," Dingle explains. "But we've tried to express that, while the multicultural experience may be different, it's not alien. We are presenting universal themes, and we continually emphasize that we are inclusive rather than exclusive. Static's teenage angst applies to all teenagers. You can connect the threads [of the stories] to your life and to what it's like when you're growing up, no matter what your color or age.

"We spent a lot of time asking retailers what we could do to reach the fans," he continues. "They told us to produce good stories with quality characters and give it to them on time. It sounds simple, but it's not. And it's starting to pay off... Once we've gained the confidence of a retailer or a reader, he becomes a die-hard fan, and he's committed to the line. We're dealing with a show-me attitude from both the retailers and the readers. But when we win them over, we have friends for life."

The sECret of thEir SucCeSs

Indeed, both McDuffie and Cowan point with a mixture of pride and frustration to the high percentage of Milestone comics that sell through to readers in comic stores. "That's because retailers are underestimating us," Cowan says. "You don't see our books in the back issue discount boxes. And stores that order us in large numbers sell through, too. But not too many do that, and that's the frustrating part."

Cowan, Dingle, and McDuffie are also frustrated because Milestone has been embraced by the mainstream media, receiving coverage in a host of news stories. The company's flagship character, Icon, graced

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"You can do anything to jolt the public. But after a while, you have to put quality between the covers."

—Derek T. Dingle, president of Milestone

the cover of the *Village Voice*, and Milestone figured prominently in the cover story on black superheroes. Stories on the company also ran in publications such as *Entertainment Weekly*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* and on cable networks CNN and MTV. The company participates in non-comics events such as black expos and other popular-culture shows.

The publicity in the mainstream pop-culture market "has given us a beachhead in that market, not a base," McDuffie states. "We have a foothold, and now we're trying to figure out who [the customers] are, what they want, and what format works for them." To that end, McDuffie adds, Milestone is considering trade paperback collections of *Icon* and other titles.

To increase mainstream accessibility, the creators have ensured that while the Milestone Universe is cohesive, the storylines don't interweave unnecessarily. "The connections are there, but you don't have to buy all the titles to get an entire story," McDuffie explains. Static's alter ego, Virgil Hawkins, works in a store run by the mother of Icon's partner, Rocket; Hardware is helping Icon, who is an alien, rebuild his spacecraft. "If you like one, you can try the others. But you don't have to."

Beginning in February, accessibility will be boosted by *Milestone for Kids*, a newsstand magazine from Welsh Publishing Group, producers of *Superman & Batman Magazine*. "We expect it to help us grow our readership in the 6- to 12-year-old group, which then will graduate to the comics," Dingle says. "All of us at Milestone were comics fans at the age of five, and we need to develop new readers who can be with us literally from the cradle to the grave."

In upcoming months, Milestone will also focus on ancillary products, including a new set of 100 trading cards from SkyBox next spring. In addition, Icon and Xombi posters by Moebius will be supplemented later this year by a Hardware poster by Cowan and Kent Williams. Those will be followed next year by more works from Moebius and others.

The successful "cover month" promotion, in which Walt Simonson and John Byrne, last December and June, respectively, drew covers for all of Milestone's books, will return in November with artwork by M.D. Bright. Kent Williams and Howard Chaykin will each have a turn sometime in '95.

Milestone's biggest splash to date came from its recently completed "Worlds Collide" crossover with its corporate partner, DC Comics. The story teamed the Superman family of heroes with the characters from Milestone's original four titles, *Blood Syndicate*, *Hardware*, *Icon*, and *Static*. "Worlds Collide" did far better than anticipated, according to McDuffie. Indeed, many of the books went into second printings, and back issues have become hard to find.

"We were kind of afraid about the fan reaction to the crossover, because we don't do 'cosmic,'" McDuffie explains. "It was a tightrope to walk. Anything with Superman, Superboy, and Steel had to be huge, and that's not our usual story. But we managed to pull off a crossover that was character-based and showed how the personalities interacted. One thing I do like is that this crossover had ramifications that go beyond the event."

"'Worlds Collide' was a pleasant surprise," Dingle says. "It ignited reader interest and also got them interested in previous issues. That was the plan, but you never know if the plan is going to work," he laughs. "It was a real boost for us, not only sales-wise, but also as a psychic boost."

In the long run, though, "it's more important to have comics that offer consistent quality throughout the year to sustain the readership. My hope is that we can retain 10 to 20 per-

ICON

Icon (inset), AKA Augustus Freeman, returns to his home planet in October's Icon *#20 after the three-part "Mothership Connection" storyline that presents him with that opportunity. There, he's debriefed about his accidental exile by the Family of Civilized Planets, which will decide Earth's ultimate fate. During his debriefing, readers will learn more about Icon's life during the antebellum period, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and World War II.*

Meanwhile, back on Earth, the pregnant Rocket—teenager Raquel Ervin (above)—must search for a replacement for herself and Icon. "Readers need to remember that this book isn't about Icon," writer Dwayne McDuffie states. "This is Rocket's book. Icon is Rocket's idea, and that will become clearer as we go along."

Rocket's replacement has already appeared, he hints, as has her selection to replace Icon. The only problem is that neither is any good at being a superhero. Rocket's baby will be born in Icon *#22 or #23, but she won't be retiring gracefully. McDuffie also says that series penciler M.D. Bright will write every third issue.*

cent of the [additional] 'Worlds Collide' readership and build from there," he says.

Are there more crossovers in the offing? "It was a lot of fun to do and the reader response has been good," McDuffie says. "If someone has an idea, we're game." But, Dingle cautions, "we don't want to create a crossover just to create one."

If another intercompany crossover does come along, it might not be with DC. "I envision a time when there will be projects and products that Milestone produces that will not be part of the DC publishing operation," Dingle says. "But our relationship with DC will be intact for many years to come. DC is more than our business partner, it's our family."

GeTtiNG SeRiAL

Dingle likens Milestone's relationship with DC to that of an independent movie producer and a major studio. Milestone owns the copyrights to and produces its own books, retaining the "final cut and total creative control," he says. DC pays Milestone a creative services fee for producing the books and distributes the completed comics for Milestone. The two split the royalties from sold copies.

DC also acts as Milestone's licensing agent, pitching characters to potential manufacturers. Milestone reviews each prospect and works closely with the licensee during production. The two companies share the licensing fee and royalties.

"DC has been extremely sensitive to our thrust of high-quality, multicultural products," Dingle says.

DC has also been very pleased with the relationship, says Wayne Markley, DC's manager of editorial communications and the company's Milestone liaison. "They ask us for advice and stay in close touch, but they decide how many books and which ones they'll put out each month."

Milestone presented DC with a 400-page bible that included about 60 pages on each series and 100 pages on the city of Dakota. Now the bible is up to 900 pages. "It was the creative content that sold DC," Cowan says.

And it was DC's creative approach that led Milestone to DC. "We could have taken it lots of places, but we didn't want to do that," Cowan says. Adds Dingle, "The Milestone-DC relationship is long-term."

So are Milestone's plans. It will wrap up 1994 with its first two mini-series. *Deathwish*, scheduled for November, will be written by Adam Blaustein and drawn by J.H. Williams III. The insane vigilante from *Hardware* escapes prison to help the police collar a serial killer who's training apprentices.

A four-parter starring the villainous Holocaust follows in December from writer Ivan Velez Jr., penciler Tommy Lee Edwards, and inker Steve Mitchell. It reveals "a whole bunch

Static

Expect Static, AKA Virgil Hawkins, to go through "a pretty tough six months or so" as he faces down a different supervillain each month, editor Dwayne McDuffie reveals. On the home front, Virgil's friend Rick gets "outed" as gay, and "Virgil has to decide how good of a friend he is."

These stories will be presented by writer Robert L. Washington III, who leaves with issue #18 and will be followed by Blood Syndicate*'s Ivan Velez Jr. Velez, joining artist Wilfred Santiago, intends to "get a lot deeper into Virgil, Frieda, and Larry's relationship," he says. He will also introduce a new love interest for Static. In addition, a new family moves into the neighborhood and becomes a key part of the supporting cast, and a new hero who must learn how to be a superhero is introduced. Then, in #22, Static must face the Chihuahuas of Doom.*

Blood Syndicate

The Blood Syndicate also has some tough times ahead: they must rebuild their factory headquarters and search for new sources of income now that they've cleaned out the crack houses. "We're going to be doing a '90s version of 'The Fantastic Four Go Broke,'" editor Dwayne McDuffie laughs. A major battle for leadership will erupt in Blood Syndicate *#25, he adds. "No one is going to guess who the new leader of the group will be."*

The creative team of Ivan Velez Jr., ChrisCross, and Rober Quijano will also introduce a new hero team that could replace the old Blood Syndicate, according to Velez. "The old team is falling apart," he says. "They've built up the factory, but the people inside it are breaking apart at the edges." One of these characters has already been introduced, but the rest will be new. On top of all that, Dogg, a talking dog, will get a girlfriend.

"I'm offended when actions don't have any consequences... When people get shot, they don't clutch their stomachs and fall over clean. Violence is seldom a solution. In fact, it usually makes things worse."

—Dwayne McDuffie, Milestone's editor-in-chief

more about the criminal structure of the Milestone Universe," McDuffie promises. Holocaust, a former member of the Blood Syndicate, has been slowly taking over Dakota's gangs. Now he thinks he's got enough power to claim a seat at the table of Dakota's organized-crime syndicate, the Coalition. Unfortunately for him, the Coalition disagrees.

"Holocaust is going to blow each of [the members] away one by one until he's in control," Velez says. "It's a very grim, very violent story. It shows just how damaged a person he really is." Readers will also learn his origin, including the identity of his mother—someone Milestone readers have already met.

Several other mini-series are also in the works, but none have officially been scheduled. "As they are finished, we'll schedule them," McDuffie says. "There's no reason for a mini-series to come out late."

A four-parter about *Blood Syndicate*'s Fade, a ghost-like character, by Velez and ChrisCross, has tentatively been slated for spring '95. "Every day, it's getting harder and more painful for Fade to stay solid," Velez says. "Before he [fades away], he wants to clean up his life—try to make up with his family and old friends, then help his sister Flashback quit smoking crack."

The Syndicate's current leader will be spotlighted in *Wise Son: The White Wolf*, written and drawn by Ho Che Anderson, creator of the recent Fantagraphics biography of Martin Luther King Jr. The book features a murder mystery, Anderson says, which Wise Son is compelled to solve after meeting an old man who becomes his mentor. As their relationship grows, Wise Son learns to take some responsibility for himself and for the community in which he lives.

Other upcoming minis include *Boogieman*, about another member of the Blood Syndicate, by Andy Helfer and Randy Duburke, and a series of at least four issues by Jo Duffy (*Catwoman*) and Colleen Doran (*Valor*) focusing on Technique, the new female counterpart to Hardware. *Shadow Cabinet*'s Iron Butterfly will also appear in a mini-series next summer by writer Erica Helene and an artist to be announced.

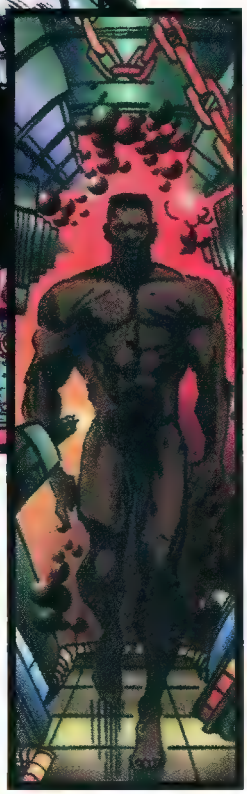
It's an ambitious slate, McDuffie acknowledges. "We're in a strong-enough position to try a few new things," McDuffie says. "I don't know [if] I would bet on these being the top-sellers in the direct market, but we believe in passionate creators who have stories they need to tell."

StrEeT SmARt

These creators tackle mature themes—a term that includes more than ultraviolence and nudity. Rocket's pregnancy, Static's recent confrontation with Jewish people, Fade's denied homosexuality, Masquerade's gender switch, and Flashback's crack addiction are hardly typical comics fare.

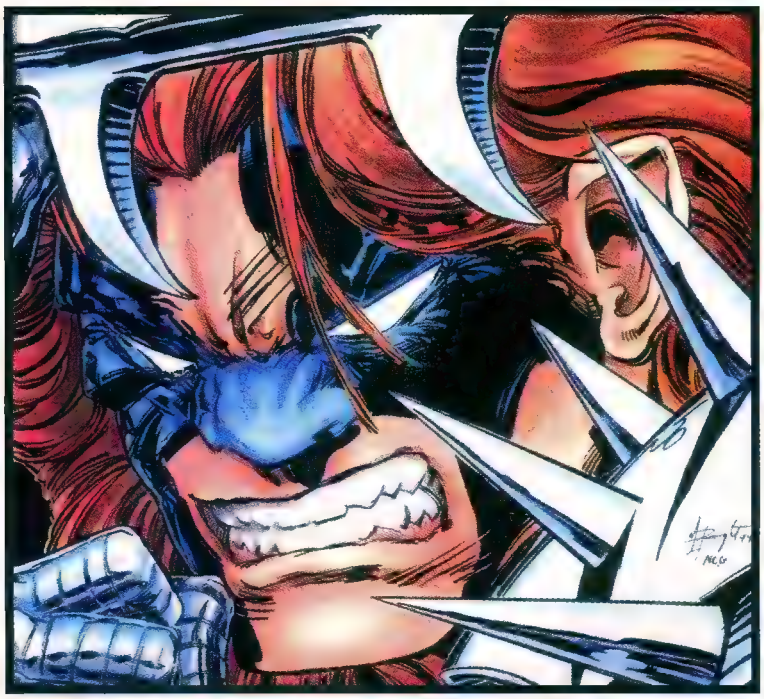
"Our readers are intelligent and willing to explore the issues we bring up," McDuffie says. "I don't always agree with everything our writers present in their stories, but we want to show diverse viewpoints, and you can't do that and always be safe."

Dingle points proudly to *Static* #6-#7, which dealt with Jewish/African-American friction. Those books were used in New York City-sponsored training classes to promote racial tolerance among kids of different ethnicities, he says. Later, a group traveling to Israel found those issues in a kibbutz they visited. "It shows



hARdwARe

In Hardware, Curtis Metcalf becomes the mentor to a "new young genius" hired by his employer, Alva Technologies. Their association causes Curtis's superhero persona, Hardware, to question some of his own decisions, and leads into a major storyline that runs for five or six issues, beginning with #25. "We're going to be tying up all the loose ends that exist, everything from day one on," writer Dwayne McDuffie says. "I'm very excited by this, because it's coming together better than even I expected." The issues will be by McDuffie, Humberto Ramos, and Prentis Rollins.



Kobalt

In Kobalt, Page, Kobalt's kid sidekick, will continue his education as a superhero, even though his screw-up in #5 wrecked things for Kobalt. "Archnemesis Milton St. Cloud throws some really interesting challenges at him in upcoming issues," McDuffie says. "I guarantee that the story is not going where you think it is."

Described as "dark and witty" by writer John Rozum, the storyline so far has been heavier on the former than the latter, McDuffie admits. Arvell Jones and John Staniscì's art style "makes it seem darker than it is, but we have to build up to the lighter elements," he says. "We can't undercut how tough Kobalt is until it's established that he is tough." An upcoming Static guest shot, he adds, in which Page and Virgil meet up in high school, "is downright funny."

Xombi

September's Xombi #6 presents a turning point for that title. That issue, by regular teamsters John Rozum and J.J. Birch, marks the climax to the first storyline. It also leads into the second story arc in issues #7-#10, "The School of Anguish," which focuses on a mysterious organization that hires out supernatural assassins. "Hidden Cities," a look at the supernatural worlds of the Dakota Universe, will follow.

that comic books can have a major impact on thinking and how we interact with one another," he says. "Our differences should strengthen us and bring us together instead of weakening and dividing us."

Violence is unavoidable in a superhero comic, Milestone's three principals admit, but there should be more to it than flashy action. "You can do anything to jolt the public," Dingle says. "But after a while, you have to put quality between the covers."

Two rules govern Milestone violence. First, actions must have consequences. "If you hit someone, you're going to hurt your hand," Cowan says. "You may even go to jail." Adds McDuffie, "I'm more offended when actions don't have any consequences than by the level of violence itself. When people get shot, they don't clutch their stomachs and fall over clean." The second rule, McDuffie says, is that "violence is seldom a solution. In fact, it usually makes things worse. Our comics have lots of violence, but it doesn't solve anything."

The Comics Code Authority, which approves some Milestone issues, doesn't influence the company's stories, McDuffie says. "Our deal with DC is that if a book doesn't get the seal, it still goes on the newsstands." Milestone never tells its writers why a book was rejected by the Code, he adds. "It's really not of interest to me. We want to write good stories, whether the Code agrees or not." Since no retailer has ever complained about the absence of Code approval, Milestone doesn't worry about the Authority's verdict.

The only exception, he notes, was "Worlds Collide." "That was with DC, and we wanted it to be clean," McDuffie says.

Both he and Cowan bristle at the notion of a "mature readers" label restricting sales to readers of a certain minimum age. "Labeling by age group doesn't make any sense," McDuffie says. "Maturity varies by person, not by age."

Milestone's founders stress that their creative philosophy focuses on working with the field's best creators and developing new talent. But some people seem to think otherwise.

"There's this misperception that Milestone hires only minority talent and blacks," says Cowan. "Some pros say it to me as a bad joke: 'I can't work for you because I'm white.' At this point, it's a real drag. It's an easy label that people pin on us that helps them avoid thinking about us. But just look at the books and you'll see differently."

Milestone's creators are tied together by their personalized approach to comics and, in many cases, their lack of previous mainstream vehicles, McDuffie says. Ivan Velez Jr. (*Blood Syndicate*), Robert L. Wash-

ington III (*Static*), and John Rozum (*Xombi* and *Kobalt*), among others, never worked on monthly comics before coming to Milestone. Now they're receiving critical acclaim, thanks in part to their offbeat personal backgrounds. "If I sat down to write a team book, I'd be drawing from the Justice League, Chris Claremont's X-Men, or Paul Levitz's Legion of Super-Heroes," McDuffie says. "But Ivan draws from Mexican soap operas."

Velez came to Milestone's attention via *Tales of the Closet*, a comic he wrote and drew starting in 1987 for a New York City gay youth organization. Tommy Lee Edwards (*Holocaust*) was recommended to the company by creator Howard Chaykin. Rozum attended a screenwriting class at New York University with McDuffie.

"We're looking for people who are doing stuff that we find interesting," McDuffie says. "Milestone is a bunch of creators who want to do comics differently. We started Milestone because we thought that was the best way to get it done."

Milestone's talent search hasn't subsided, they stress, despite the recent departure of co-founder and Director of Talent Development Michael Davis, who left to head up Motown Animation. As it turns out, though, a number of creators, including artists John Paul Leon (*Static*) and ChrisCross (*Blood Syndicate*), have walked in off the street. "Creators are seeing our books and deciding that this is the place for them," Cowan says. "And that's really cool."

Taking Care of Business

In addition to quality storytelling, another reason for the company's growing success with retailers and distributors stems from its 100-percent-on-time delivery record.

"Our perfect shipping schedule has been ignored by the media," Cowan says. "In a sense, that's the way it should be. We're doing our job and the books are coming out. But in reality, it doesn't happen anywhere else. We want to call attention to our commitment. There's a contract between us and our readers, and we intend to fulfill it." Adds McDuffie, "On-time is our first agreement, and our people know it. We're committed to it. We have to tell a high-quality story, and it's got to be there" on schedule.

Retailers have noticed that commitment, Dingle says. "The distributors and retailers are gaining confidence in us and have become our best advocates. They're on the front lines talking to the readers because they read the books. They know the fans want the books when they're promised, and the retailers want to sell them to maintain their cash flow. Late books hurt everybody."

Milestone's next challenge, he adds, is to increase the number of retailers who are willing to take a chance on the company. That goes for readers, too, McDuffie stresses. "If you're reading this in *Wizard* and you've never seen our books [in your local store], ask your retailer to order them for you alone."

It's an uphill battle, but it's a fight that's being won, they agree. "Comic companies have to grab readers one by one and they have to ensure those readers tell somebody else," Dingle says. "That's what helps us." In fact, McDuffie adds, sales have remained steady through the industry's roller-coaster ride of the past year, indicating that the readership is solid.

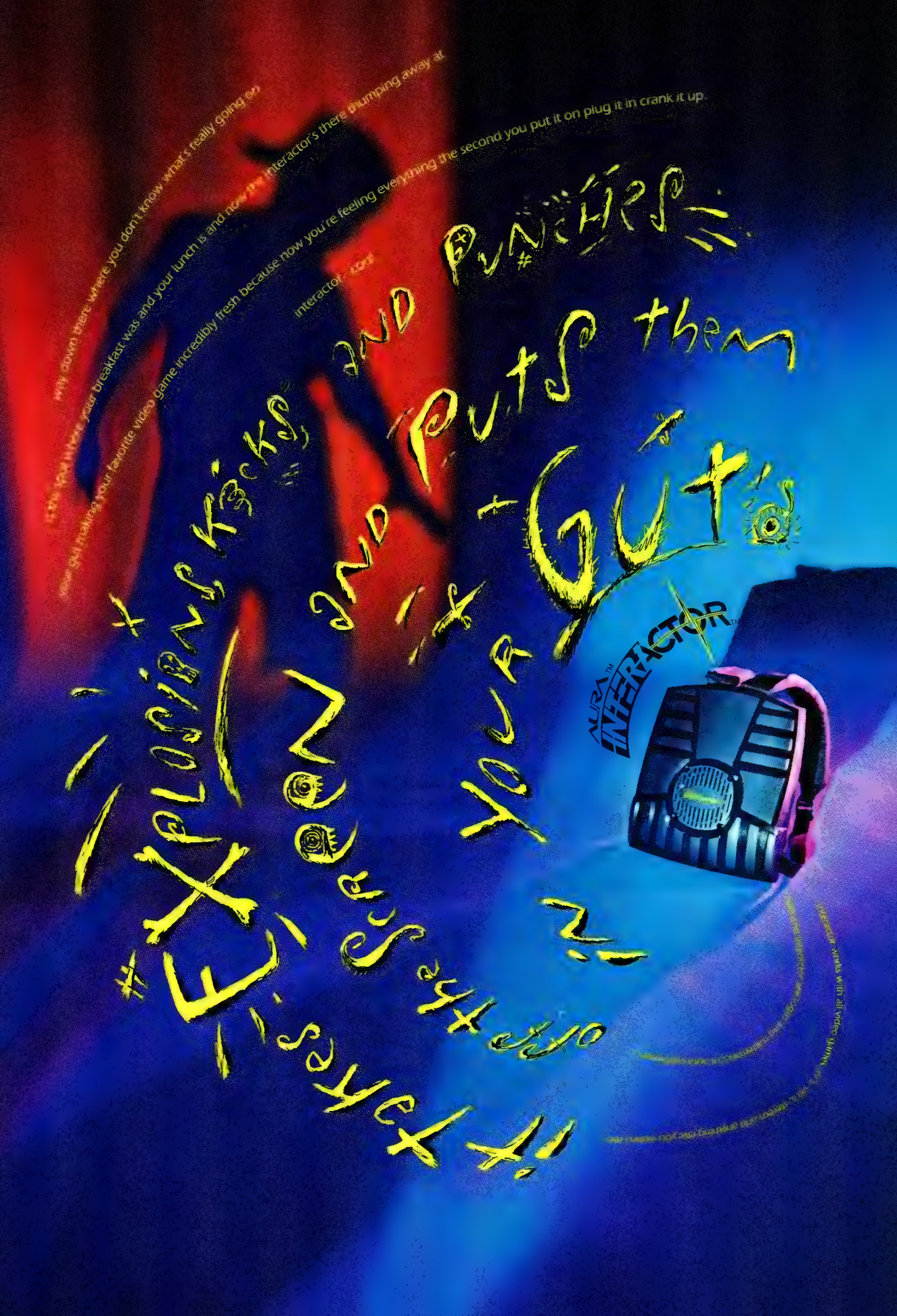
The reason, Cowan says, is because "when we started, we put together a creative, production, and business infrastructure to ensure we'd be here. And after 19 months and 85 on-time books, we're still here. The ones who were hot have died."

Milestone's philosophy has its foundation in the basics of comic books, Dingle concludes. "When you look at our experience, we've all grown up on Kirby and Ditko, and our roots run deep. We just want to provide something that has a little more relevance than stuff has had in the last five years. And it's exciting." ☆

Craig Shutt is a freelance writer based in Chicago who also grew up on Kirby and Ditko. Like Kobalt, he has been described as "dark and witty."

Shadow Cabinet

Shadow Cabinet's new creative team of Matt Wayne, John Paul Leon, and Shawn Martinbrough begins "Red Death," a five-issue arc, in issue #6, which will show Dharma in real danger for the first time in his life, says Wayne. Dharma will also recruit new members after stranding the existing team in Antarctica. "In grand comics tradition," Wayne laughs, "I took over the book [with issue #4] and blew everything up."



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For the names of the winners, available after November 25, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Guitar Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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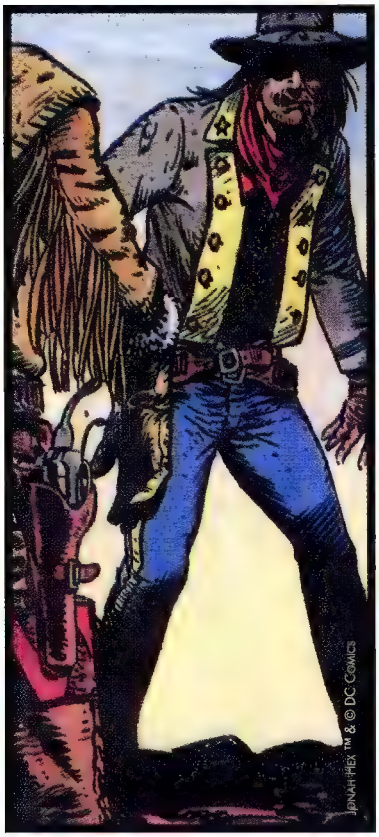
WHAT A LONG, STRANGE TRIP:

THE TIM TRUMAN INTERVIEW



From Grimjack to the Grateful Dead, from Scout to Santana, Tim Truman has brought a rebel's swagger and a rocker's energy to the world of comics. Whether he's drawing Jonah Hex or writing Turok, he gives his work a flavor of shamanism and sagebrush that is rare and bracing in these days of spandex and testosterone. By Paul J. Grant

Topps is bringing back the Lone Ranger and Tonto, so it brought in Truman to flesh out the characters.

The Lone Ranger and Tonto ™ & © Palladium Limited Partnership

Fine comic creators are always talented, of course, but the better ones also boast intelligence, creativity, and experience. One such creator, 38-year-old Pennsylvania native Tim Truman, has used his writing pen and artistic pencil to brighten several comic universes during more than a decade of work. Truman creates distinctive, unique characters, including Grimjack and Scout for First Comics, and intriguingly revamps others, like Airboy for Eclipse, Vertigo's Jonah Hex, and DC's Hawkman. His drastic alterations of the latter's history earned him critical acclaim, as did his historical works, among them the *Wilderness* graphic novel.

Truman recently spoke to *Wizard* about his whirlwind career to date as well as upcoming projects like the *Lone Ranger and Tonto* series, a comic biography of Carlos Santana, and a highly anticipated *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo* follow-up.

SCOUT ™ & © TIMOTHY TRUMAN

WIZARD: You attended the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. What was that like?

TRUMAN: We were housed in this big, ramshackle old mansion with a pool out back where we'd go swimming with tadpoles and frogs. I'd flunked out of two art colleges; I just couldn't connect with anything or anybody. [At] the Kubert School, there were all these people interested in comics. Also, the instructors, instead of having just graduated from school themselves and taken teaching jobs, had been in the comic book, comic strip, and animation fields for 30 or 40 years.

Basically, it gave us an excuse to just sit down and work for three years. Instructors would come look over our shoulders and make suggestions and give us assignments, all the scholastic stuff. You had Dick Ayers there, and Dick Giordano and Joe himself. The most successful classes were the ones where we were just given an opportunity to sit down and work.

Had you always wanted to do comics?

Yeah, since I got my first comic in the first grade. It was *Our Fighting Forces*, with Gunner, Sarge, and Pooch, by Joe Kubert. That's why it was such a kick to do a Gunner, Sarge, and Pooch story in [DC's] 1993 *Sgt. Rock* special. Following that it was [Dell's] *Kona, Monarch of Monster Isle* and [Gold Key's] *Turok*, the Spirit reprint that Harvey did, and [DC's] *Fighting American*.

I was a big *Thor* fan. I always wanted to do *Thor*, this big Norse mythological thing, because I always loved the "Tales of Asgard" more than the Thor-in-a-modern-day-setting. My tastes always ran towards adventure and myth. I loved Marvel books, but the ones I really enjoyed had some superadventure—science fiction or a monster—rather than just superheroes beating on each other; something weird went on. My crowd at the Kubert School had more *Creepy* and *Eerie* comics than *Superman*, and we certainly had more underground [comics] than [issues of] *Flash*.

What attracted you to horror?

It was weird and I wasn't supposed to like it. I grew up in the '60s watching James Whale's *Frankenstein* [film], all the Universal and Hammer horror films, and the movie serials like *Flash Gordon* and *Commander Cody* [on TV]. All that stuff really turned me on.

How did you break into comics?

I went to one of these little Chicago minicons, and First Comics had just started up. At the First Comics table, artist Lenin Delsol and [Art Director] Joe Staton really seemed to like my stuff. They were talking with [writer] John Ostrander about creating Grimjack at that time, and they asked me to do some designs on the character.

I still have very fond memories of that whole experience, especially while the checks were coming in regularly. Those early issues of *Grimjack* [from late 1984] weren't well-drawn, but there's still lots of heart and soul to them. They were incredibly influential...on comic books and the cyberpunk movement. Most of those cats were *Grimjack* fans.

There are still quite a few Grimjack fanatics.

John and I would love to do him again, but the [ownership] situation with the character would have to be really clear-cut. At this point, I'm not even sure who the caretakers are, and that really makes me angry. I'm certain *Grimjack* could outsell *Spawn* if we were doing it.

It would be funny doing *Grimjack* now, because so many of the things we did in that book are commonplace now. That book was just so adventurous for the time. It would be a real challenge to take *Grimjack* a notch higher on the old shock level.

Why do so many people really love Grimjack?

He just has this mythic identity that draws upon the whole hero persona. There's something really western about him, but also something really samurai about him, and something really Apache and Zulu.

He embodies the warrior spirit?

He's the quintessential tough guy with the heart of gold, but you never know how deep you have to plumb to get to that heart. Grimjack would always surprise you, with either mercy or being merciless. He was a character who really kept the reader jumping and involved.

The whole phrase "grim and gritty" was coined for Grimjack, but he wasn't entirely grim. [The book] was also incredibly humorous, and it wasn't all black humor. A lot of it was slapstick, or subtle dialogue humor. Grimjack was the bad boy that everybody wants to let out. He appeals to people the same way James Dean or Geronimo do. There's some point in your life when the mortgage is due, or someone is giving you a hard time, and you'd like to be Grimjack. [*Laughs*]

In mid-1985, you left *Grimjack* to write and draw *Scout* for Eclipse. What was the genesis of Scout and his whole mythic science fiction universe?

I'd been interested in Native American cultures since high school, Apache culture in particular. While I was at the Kubert School, my wife bought me some really hard-core scholarly works on Apache culture. I was also interested in [Akira] Kurosawa and samurai movies, and I've always had an abiding interest in post-holocaust scenarios.

All these interests just piled up and came crashing down one day while I was taking a shower. I wanted to do an Apache character, and I decided his name was Scout and he was going to fight these four monsters from Apache mythology. These monsters symbolized what I thought were the four corporate American evils at the time.

One day, Mike Baron and I were sitting around and he asked me, if I wasn't doing

Grimjack, what would I like to do? And suddenly I had this image in my head, and I said I'd like to do an Apache samurai riding a motorcycle.

Why Apache more than any other Indian culture?

The whole premise of *Scout* is a post-holocaust scenario with ecological overtones. I thought, "If everything goes absolutely, totally as wrong-side-up as it can get, who would be most likely to survive in such a wasteland?"

The only answer was the Apache, because they lived in the desert and were able to run 75 miles a day when the temperature was 110 degrees. They were able to live on piñon nuts and water out of cactus. They had always been picked on by the Mexicans, whites, and other tribes, and were quite feared because they were a hardy people.

That isn't romanticizing a Native American culture. This is all really well-documented. I've been in that desert and it's a real scary place. I'm in awe that anyone could thrive as a culture there, and the Apaches did just that. That's what *Scout*'s all about: thriving in the wasteland, and the kind of mindset you'd need to be able to do that.

The picture you paint of this post-ecological holocaust is one of rampant corruption, where the political arena is a metaphor for the ecological, natural wasteland. The monsters all wear human guises.

And they still do. I've never been more disappointed in my life than I am now with the whole political system. Being a strong Democrat supporter, I thought we'd have the Civilian Conservation Corps back by now, like the one in the '40s. Instead we just have more scandals and dirty dealing and back-biting. It's like the Who's song "Won't Get Fooled Again." You could use that as a soundtrack for this administration.

Can we expect to see more Scout material?

I wanted a little time to pass, mainly for contractual reasons, to see how things panned out with Eclipse, but I absolutely want to get back to *Scout* someday. Eric Schweig, who played Uncas in *The Last of the Mohicans*, turns out [to be] a *Scout* fan, and he gave me a middle-of-the-night call saying he'd like to adapt it into a movie. So that's something we're in negotiation for right now.

How do you do your research?

Most of the research comes from good historical books based on [the subject of] a comic that I want to get into, and then noting different books in [each] bibliography. I'll go to the library. I keep my eye on every magazine and every book...

I've got a book called *The Horse Soldier*, all about guys who ride horses—cavalry

JONAH HEX™ & © DC COMICS

Wild West Wise-ass Jonah Hex. He'll have another mini-series next year, so keep an eye peeled.

High-powered adventure mixed with a bit of black humor made up the gritty world of *Grimjack*.

GRIMJACK™ & © FIRST COMICS, INC.

men—put out by the Company of Military Historians. I pick up real obscure uniform books, stuff like that. In the evenings, I play guitar and look at my reference books.

After Eclipse, you did the *Hawkworld* mini-series for DC in 1989. Who first thought it would be a good idea to revamp Hawkman's origin?

Gardner Fox and I talked about that when I was doing *Scout*. He said, "I'd like to do something like John Carter of Mars." So after I got my *Scout* commitment out of the way, I wrote Gardner a letter [that] said, "Hey, Gar, I've got this free time in my schedule. Let's do your John Carter idea, except let's do it on Thanagar with Hawkman." But the night that I wrote that letter, Gardner died. That was really creepy.

I had mentioned wanting to do Hawkman to John Ostrander, and I guess he mentioned it to [DC Editor] Mike Gold. A week later, Gold called and asked if I wanted to do Hawkman...

I have no idea what [Fox] would have worked up. I could have done something really blood-and-thunder and pulpy, a Gardner Fox tribute, but I didn't. I thought it would be enough of a tribute to just do the character and dedicate it to him without mimicking him in any way. It was the seedy underbelly of Thanagar rather than the shiny Edgar Rice Burroughs universe. That's where my personal interests are.

You managed to enrage a lot of old-time Gardner Fox/Joe Kubert fans with *Hawkworld*.

Yeah, especially those that only managed to read the first issue. Most of those that read through all three issues of the mini-series and saw what I was trying to do appreciated it, but I've had people come up to me at cons practically spitting on me. In no way did I want to denigrate the character, especially since I was dedicating this to Gardner and Joe Kubert. This was just my take on the fact that there are heroes, but they aren't created by seeing a bat fly through the window.

In order to appreciate the story, you had to hang with it. Luckily, a lot of people did. I'm very proud of the fact that it won a Haxstur Award, a fan-based nomination sponsored by the government of Spain in 1992, for best comic series. They flew me over there to accept it. Having been so fond of European work for so many years, that was a real honor.

What is your reaction to DC's bringing back, in a way, the original, pre-*Hawkworld* Hawkman?

I haven't been reading the book that much; I kind of did my job on Hawkman. My three issues were very well-received, but hey, he's not my character. They can do anything they want to with him. I told my story, and I'm pretty glad. More power to anybody who wants to work on the character. If that's what Dan [Jurgens, writer of *Zero Hour*] wants to do, fine.

Did the two historical works, *Wilderness* and *Straight Up to See the Sky*, and your adaptation of the play *Tecumseh* get you a new audience?

In quite a big way. People don't realize how big those books are outside the comics market. I mean, I've built a recording studio and bought too many guitars from the sales of those books to historians and history buffs and historical re-enactors, just through two mail-order ads in some history magazines.

I was inducted into the Museum of the Old Northwest, in Indiana, showcasing some of my work for its historical value. These are people who know their stuff. That's one of the proudest experiences of my career. *Wilderness* and *Straight Up* are starting to appear in the bibliographies of straight history books, and that's pretty neat. The *Wilderness* graphic novel is probably the most fully realized comic biography, if you discount *Maus*. It's a thing I researched for five years.

Straight Up to See the Sky is a straight-prose history book I wrote about frontier history. Both were recommended by the American Library Association. *Wilderness* is still hard to top [for me]. A hundred years from now, I hope people remember me for it. I'm asked to speak at historical societies, to give slide presentations about how to accumulate research material on 18th-century clothing and the material culture of Eastern Native American tribes.

One of your most recent collaborations was with writer Joe Lansdale and inker Sam Glanzman last year on Vertigo's *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo*, which on the surface seems like a strange combination.

After all that work as a writer/artist, I wanted to take a couple years off and just work with writers and retrench and rethink my writing. Steve Bissette sent me a copy of a short story that Joe had written about zombies in a post-holocaust setting. He said, "This guy writes like you draw." I read the story and it terrified me.

When Joe and I got together, we really clicked. So when *Jonah Hex* came up, DC approached Joe about doing the writing, and he called me up and said, "I want to work with you, so would you draw this?" And I said, "Yeahhhhh!"

You see, Jonah Hex had a big influence on me earlier on. There's a lot of Jonah Hex in Grimjack. I'm not a fanboy about characters as much as I am about creators, but I had some real fond memories of Jonah Hex. It was kind of a weird little addition to Ver-

tigo's stable, wasn't it? [*Laughs*] It's like popping AC/DC down in the middle of a Morrissey concert. "Here we are! Get out of the way, Brits!" [*Laughs*]

You're working with Lansdale on a new project, aren't you?

Yeah, we're working on *The Lone Ranger and Tonto* mini-series for Topps. I've been so associated with Native American characters that they asked me to get involved. They wanted me to do the Lone Ranger because they didn't want the same old Tonto. I enjoyed working with Joe so much that I called him up and asked him to write it.

Basically, this is Tonto with an attitude. The Lone Ranger is trying to deal with his own mythology. His adventures have been written up in all these pulp novels, just like they did Wild Bill Hickok and Jesse James—this made them legends in their own time. He's confronted with the same sort of problem, and he doesn't know how to deal with it.

This is a bone of contention between him and Tonto; people in these towns they go to only know them from their exploits in the very popular dime novels, where Tonto is the faithful Indian companion who always comes whenever the Lone Ranger whistles for him.

The reality of it is that they aren't quite as glamorous as that. They're very much heroes, and the Lone Ranger still has that real stringent code of honor, but we've just added these certain psychological differences between him and Tonto. That's really the backbone of the story.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Lone Ranger has been his air of mystery; he keeps his interior self a secret to most other characters.

We touched on a little of the mysterious aspect of the Lone Ranger—probably not as much as I would have liked to—but this is very much a daylight situation. In the end, he literally rides off into the sunset. Whenever he's operating at night, I make use of those darker aspects; he'll wear a long trench coat—they called them dusters back then—and a scarf across his face, very hidden and shadowed.

We made Tonto a Potawatami Indian, with the Potawatami travel regalia... We definitely give the two characters equal time, but on the Tonto pages, I was just ripping and roaring. It's hard for me to draw a character without chin stubble; drawing the Lone Ranger as a good-looking guy was very, very hard for me. [*Laughs*] Whenever I deal with a grungy guy, I guess I can relate to him, 'cause I'm a grungy guy myself.

It's really gotten the Lone Ranger people up in arms over the script, but we're just standing our ground. I'm sure the Lone Ranger Fan Club will be upset. I don't tackle anything with disrespect, and I will not approach an icon like the Lone Ranger with disrespect.

When I did *Hawkworld* and [Eclipse's] *The Spider*, these things are such icons that they've become sort of stereotypes of themselves. You have to look beyond the stereotypes: what does this really say to my era? Tonto [seems to be] this lackey that the Lone Ranger orders around; it just doesn't wash. You take this icon, you look at it within a historical context, and then you play with it.

In issue #4, they are the heroes they were always meant to be and always have been to America, but we use the first three issues to pull that apart and examine it. You have to have all these flaws and problems—you establish those first—and that makes the fourth issue all the more powerful; it makes it better entertainment. The reader and characters have to go through some changes to get to the fourth issue.

How will this book differ from your other western collaboration with Lansdale, *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo*?

This is a lot brighter, definitely a heroic story despite all the psychological interplay between the Lone Ranger and Tonto. This is lighter stuff, something for any age group; a 60-year-old or a 10-year-old will enjoy it. *Jonah Hex* is definitely a mature book, with bathroom humor and twisted stuff.

I hear you and Lansdale are doing a second five-issue Jonah Hex project.

We just signed the contract for *Jonah Hex: Riders of the Worm and Such*. I'll be working on that next year. Joe and I were a little reluctant to do another western—we did the first Jonah Hex series and the Lone Ranger series—and [be seen] as western guys, but Vertigo really wanted the book badly. Joe and I were still up in the air about it, and then [*laughs*] I was shopping at Kmart. I went to the video section and there were these Crash Corrigan and Gene Autry movies where they were cowboys that went to the Earth's core and found these underground Atlantean characters.

As soon as I saw these, I said, "We have to do Jonah Hex, and it has to have this underground adventure and there have to be singing cowboys." [*Laughs*] It was very important that we did it as immediately as we could. So I called up Joe and he was in total agreement. He's [written] this absolutely hilarious action thing: we've got worm people under the Earth and singing cowboys. You can imagine Jonah Hex in the midst of these cowboys going, "Oh, God"; he hates poetry.

How will the sequel be different from its predecessor?

This series is more fantasy-oriented than the first one; it's even funnier than the first. If you sat down and did a summary of the entire first one, the plot is pretty simple; the plot of this one is a little more complex.

Another character you've done lately is Valiant's Turok, one that you're fond of from your youth. When you finally got a chance to write him, did you make a conscious deci-

Truman's *Hawkworld* revealed the underbelly of a not-so-perfect world of Thanagar.

SANTANA ™ & © ROCK-IT COMIX

Truman's love of music and the guitar is displayed in works such as *Santana*.

sion to bring the Native American aspect of the character to the forefront?

That was one of the occasions where the publisher contacted me and said, "We really want you to do this." It took me a little while to warm up to the idea, actually, because I was in the middle of some other things. In my reading of Turok, I'd never seen him pinpointed to a culture. For me to do the book, that was one of the absolute mandates, because I refused to write him as a quote unquote Indian.

He'd been rather generic up to then.

Exactly. That's what an "Indian" is—generic. I wanted to get rid of the "Great Spirit" stuff.

How did you decide to make him Kiowa?

Well, it's actually Kiowa Apache. The Kiowa and the Apache intermingled after the Kiowa left the plains and came down to the Southwest, and became a separate branch called the Kiowa Apache. That's what Turok is. I based that on his and Andar's clothes and hairstyle as Alberto Gioletti had drawn them [in the original *Turok, Son of Stone*]. It looked like he was using a Kiowa reference.

OK, while you're noted for historical-type comics, you're also noted for doing rock and roll comics. Tell me about the Grateful Dead and Santana books you've done for Kitchen Sink Press and Malibu's Rock-It Comix, respectively. You're a big-time fan, aren't you?

Oh yeah! I read a one- or two-paragraph article that Kitchen Sink was starting a Grateful Dead comic, so I wrote them a letter saying I'd be interested in participating and they got back to me and said, "Hey, Jerry Garcia knows your work." It turns out that Jerry Garcia's a comic book fan.

And what about Santana?

Well, Malibu started its Rock-It line, and one of the [people] they wanted to profile was Santana. So when they had an interview with [the group], Carlos said, "Yeah, you can do it, but can you get Tim Truman to do the artwork?" It turns out that Carlos is a *Scout* fan, and he's taken my graphic albums with him on tour just about every time he goes out, and re-reads them.

A mutual admiration society! That's a bit of weird synchronicity, isn't it?

Things always work out weird with me and Carlos. He's a spiritual guy, and he's just put me on my heels a couple of times, calling out of the blue at really opportune moments. I got to meet him backstage at a concert he did with Bob Dylan. Later on, we had lots of conversations on the phone. I got some really in-depth stuff out of him and did a biography of him in comics form. A lot of the material I got out of him I don't think he'd ever told anybody before.

After I finished the comic, I got a call from his brother Jorge, who told me Carlos wants me to do his biography in regular book form after the comic's published, a year or two down the road. That comic was one of the high points of my career because I realized that the week that I was first turned onto Carlos and saw him playing on some PBS special was the same week that I decided to become an artist. A lot of that had to do with the inspiration, the electric charges that went through me when I saw him on television that evening, and I decided that I wanted to create things, whether it was music, writing, or art.

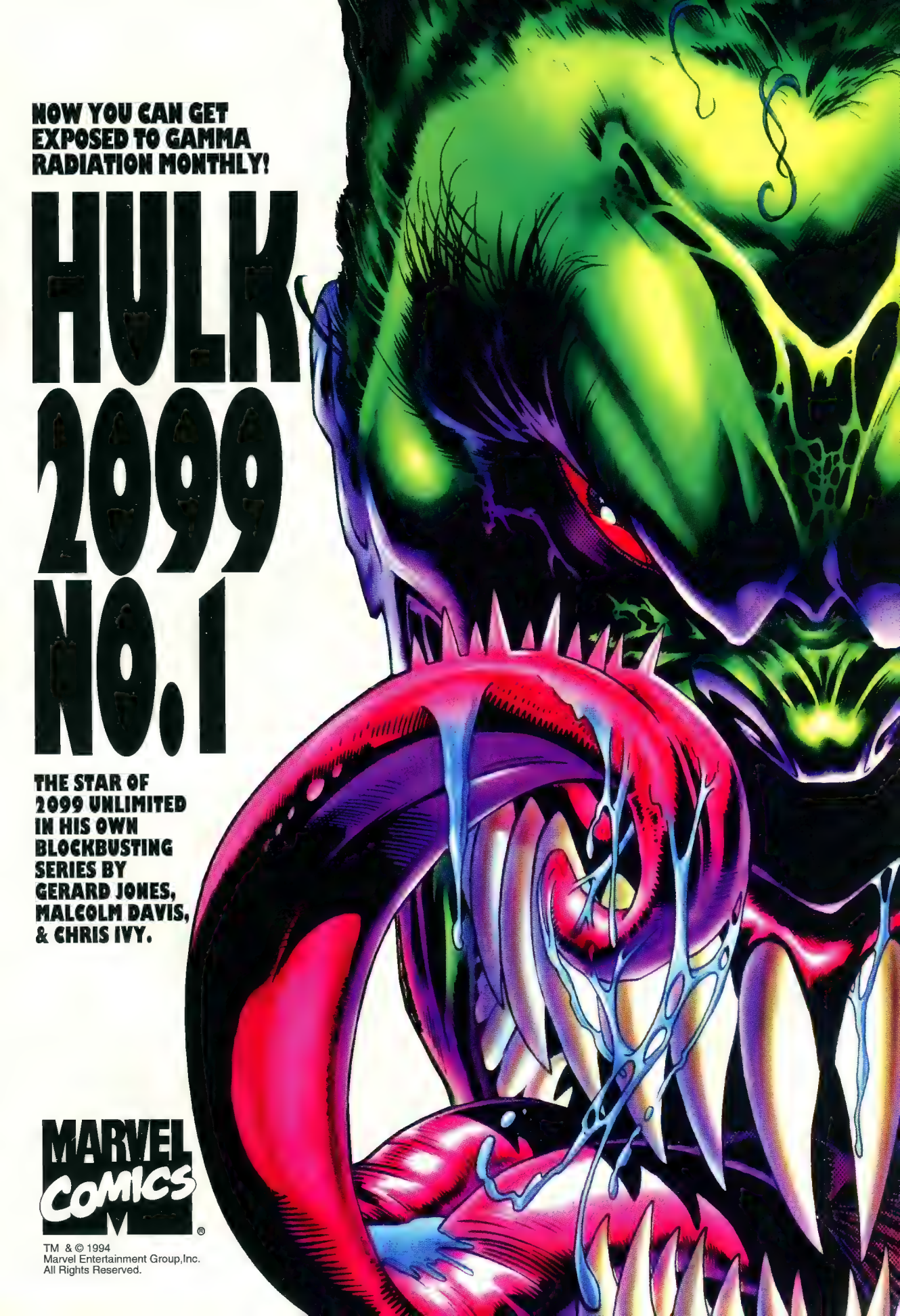
So which do you prefer, writing or drawing?

I like to do the whole package. There are certain projects that I really want to work with other people on. I could have written *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, but I thought that I would have gotten too serious with it, too preachy. I wanted an element of fun to it, so I said, Joe's gotta [write] this one. He knows the material, he knows the era, and he's got an element of fun and adventure. Besides, I just wanted to work with him again. Sometimes I want to make a solo album and sometimes I want to play with the band. Generally, I prefer to do the whole thing.

With that in mind, what is your main professional goal in the future?

I'd like to do work with integrity. I don't want to be a two-pages-a-day kind of artist, where you can hand me any project and, "Yeah, OK, I'll do it." I always like to make each project real special. If it doesn't hit a chord in me, I just don't have anything to do with it. I'm too serious about doing this stuff. I realize it's entertainment, but I've spent too many hours with it for it just to become a job. I just want to do stuff that has the integrity of a good movie or a good novel. ☆

Paul J. Grant is a Michigan-based writer who is currently seeking to do a graphic novel with John Grisham.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WITH SEAN AUNE

SPAWN TOYS COMETH

As an extra bonus for this month's column, we've unearthed prototype photographs of Todd McFarlane Productions's Spawn action figures. Hope you enjoy 'em.

Sometime this year, Kenner is planning on releasing a series of one- to two-inch die-cast figures based on famous science fiction movies and comic book characters. Notables include *Star Wars*'s Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, and Han Solo, along with Terminator, Aliens, and Predator figures. Comic characters include Superman, other characters from last year's "Reign of the Supermen" storyline, and Azrael.

And, hey—check out the Ripclaw statue designed by Marc Silvestri's Top Cow Productions and Clayburn Moore and sculpted by Moore. Moore's previous work includes the Savage Dragon and Pitt statues. This baby ships in September, so ask your local retailer for it.

Hasbro has already released its plans for the *Street Fighter* movie figures. Guile, portrayed by Jean-Claude Van Damme, will have multiple 3-and-3/4-inch figures, as well as a 12-incher.

Fans of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* should be excited by forthcoming additions to both toy lines. New *Next Generation* toys to look for include Data in Dress Uniform, Captain Picard in Duty Uniform, Ensign Wesley Crusher, Gowron in Ritual Klingon Attire, Lt. Thomas Riker, and Data as seen in the episode "Redemption." Over at *Deep Space Nine*: Chief Miles O'Brien in Duty Uniform, Lt. Dax in Duty Uniform, and Dr. Bashir in Duty Uniform will be beaming into the line.

On the other hand, certain *Next Generation* line items have been put on indefinite hold, including the Phaser Rifle, the Starship Enterprise Flight Control Simulator, and the boxed collector's set of Dixon Hill. Only one item was canceled from each of the *Classic Star Trek* and *Deep Space Nine* lines, namely the Classic Enterprise and the Cardassian Warship, respectively. These items may appear later on, perhaps in 1995, but no one knows for sure.

It is not very often you see a toy line hit the shelves and then within two months skyrocket in price. One line that did, though, was the *Nightmare Before Christmas* toys from Hasbro. With a very short production window and every available piece being scooped up by collectors, these items were very hard to find in stores and quickly demanded a high price tag.

It was announced at Toy Fair, however, that with Disney's release of the film to video this fall, Hasbro will re-release the figures to the toy market. As to what this will do to the value of the original figures, no one knows for sure. If Hasbro makes no sort of marking on each figure's packaging to identify it as a second release, or otherwise vary the design or painting of the figures, there will be no way to distinguish them from the first run issues. This should cause a major fluctuation in the pieces' collectible value. How large the production run is this time around will, play a major factor in the determination of their values.

Rumors have run rampant about cast

At left, the Violator in his clown form with a drumstick (or whatever). On the right, Spawn with action...thing. These two, along with the other Spawn toys, should be available late this year.

BACKGROUND ART ™ & © ECLIPSE

Left to right: Tremor, some guy I never heard of; Spawn, in his medieval costume; and Overtkill, all contorted up. He's not planning on joining Cirque de Soleil, right? I hope not.

changes for the second season of *SeaQuest DSV*. Well, as it turns out...they're true! As of right now, the changes will not affect the toy line. A source at Playmates says, "Currently no figures have been canceled, but we do reserve the right to add to and delete from a line as we choose." They also assure that the Darwin figure will be shipping at long last!

On the down side of the *SeaQuest DSV* toy line, however, all the vehicles are currently on hold. Though they appeared at Toy Fair, at this point they may be released at some later date, or they may never be seen at all. A common practice among toy companies is to present an item, and if orders are not high enough, they simply do not begin production. While this may disappoint collectors, it is a justifiable business decision.

Inquiring consumers want to know where the *Stargate* figures are. Originally slated for release in June to anticipate the film's August opening, the figures were put on hold until a later date when the movie got pushed back to a Thanksgiving release. The new scheduled release is somewhere around late August or early September. So never fear, those Kurt Russell and James Spader action figures you've always wanted are still going to be released.

Having discussed how to store your collectible toys last issue, this issue we deal with how to grade them. Everything covered here will pertain to toys that have never been opened, and remain in their original sealed packaging.

While a lot of people are perfectly happy to just own a particular toy, some people want the toy in pristine packaging. This means no scuff marks, creases, bends, tears, or blemishes—no marks on the package.

There are several different methods of grading, but as with comics, everyone's opinion of an item's condition dif-

On the left, the Violator in his true form and on the right, the Spawn monster truck (Sunday! Sunday! Sunday!).

SPAWN IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS. ALL CHARACTERS SHOWN ™ & © TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

fers slightly. What one may consider near mint condition, another person may consider fine condition. Grading is totally a matter of perspective and what guidelines you have decided to use for your own collection.

When grading something, use the basic system, like the comics system of: Mint, Near Mint, Very Fine, Fine, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor. This is the simplest to use and the one with which most people are familiar. There are other systems out there for toys, but most still have bugs to work out.

If you are looking for a truly mint package, good luck. A truly mint package can be just as hard to find as the toy itself. Unfortunately, a lot of people believe that the toys arrive at your local Toys 'R' Us, Wal-Mart, Kmart or wherever straight from the factory in beautiful condition. Truth is, many toys arrive in the store, in factory sealed cases, damaged far beyond the point of being sellable. Sliced boxes, rolled cards, broken blister bubbles and any of many other numerous things that may happen in packing or shipping are a common occurrence in brand-new, factory-sealed cases.

Does all this mean you should give up hope of finding a box that meets the guidelines that you have set for your own collection? Not always. Quite often you can find your desired toy in mint shape if you are willing to spend the time looking for it. Once again, however, this brings up the problem with grading: personal perspective. For example, you look at a blister-card and call it Mint, while your friend may look at it and use some other grading system altogether and judge it comparatively lower. Until this collectibles market adopts a universally approved grading system, you are going to run into people who do not necessarily agree with your choice of system. So, now, you are not only concerned with which grade to judge the selected item at, but also about which system to use.

What is the solution to this problem? A universal grading system must be adopted at some point. The next question is who should come up with the guidelines. I believe consumers would be the best source for a reasonable and easily understood system. If you have an idea for a grading system kicking around in your head, or have a system that you already use that you would like to suggest, write to Toy Grading System, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. If we get enough good suggestions over the next couple of months, we'll discuss them in a future issue. Please remember to include your address in all correspondence.

Until next issue, see you in aisle 7C.

Sean Aune owns Splash Comics and Toys, a store in Kirksville, Mo.

™ & © Top Cow Productions

Coming to stores in September will be this Ripclaw sculpture by Clayburn Moore. Very cool!

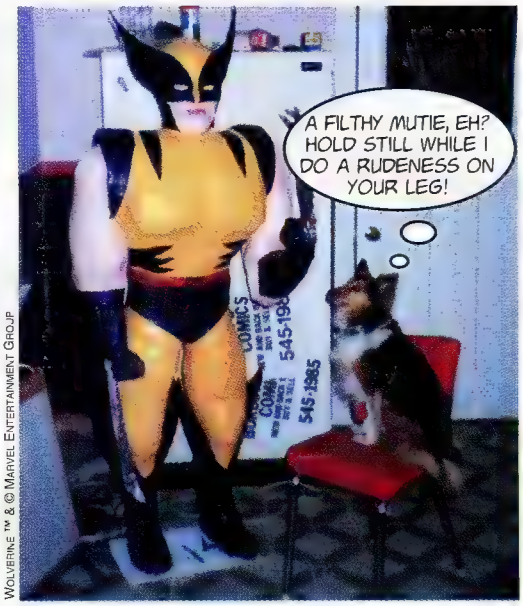
™ & © Capcom Co. Ltd.

The assorted Street Fighter Colonel Guile figures. From left to right, front row: Arctic Assault Guile, Paratrooper Guile, and Navy S.E.A.L. Guile. Back row: Nightfighter Guile, Sonic Boom Punch Guile, and Rock Trooper Guile.

HOMEMADE HEROES

In addition to this month's Homemade Heroes public service announcement (see below, kiddies), we're also showcasing the biggest darn Homemade Hero ever to grace these illustrious pages! Crafted by Gary Burton of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Wolverine stands 5'5 1/2" tall, and to quote Gary, "...is not made from a Toy Biz Silver Surfer." (Yeah, who do you think you're foolin', chump?) For going way beyond the call of duty with his entry (way, *way* beyond), Gary walks off with an *X-Men* #30 signed by Matt Ryan and Andy Kubert, a *Gambit* #1 signed by Howard Mackie and Lee Weeks, a Gold Edition *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1 signed by Buzz, a *Spawn/Batman* signed by Frank Miller, a Gold Edition *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, and a *Beavis and Butt-Head* #1 signed by Rick Parker and Mike Lackey.

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send your entries to: Figure of the Month Contest, c/o Toying Around, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. (No Polaroids—and make sure you focus, dammit!)



WOLVERINE ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

GRAND PRIZE winner

"Hey, lay off! These are pecs!"

So, what did Gary make this towering mutant out of? Glad you asked. Three and a half spools of wire, eight wire coat hangers, one plastic coat hanger, one Christmas wrapping paper roll, one paper towel roll, three 3/4-inch boards, eight weekend newspapers, ten yards of colored fabric (What color? Wolverine colors, you idiot! Keep reading!), four quarts and five ounces of Podgee paint, a whole mess of staples, paint, and glue, and a whole lot of hard work. And do you know what all this adds up to, boys and girls? Yes sir, too much free time. Congratulations, Gary.

Public Service Announcement

Actually, you'll be doing a service to both yourself and us if you pay attention here. Shown below are two Homemade Hero entries that, under normal circumstances, would never see the light of day in this mag. Take a look at 'em, then read below for the reasons why.

UHH... NEVER MIND

"....."

So, why wouldn't we show this figure? Well, for starters, we have no idea who he (or she) is. Too much of the photo is empty space. When it comes time to snap a photo of your creation, make sure you capture the figure(s) nice and big. Don't let all of your hard work go to waste. And for God's sake, focus!

WONDER MAN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

"Jump! Jump!""

Where you photograph your figure is just as important as how. Choose a background that will make your figure stand out. And unless you're making a joke or something, try and choose a setting that's a little more...pleasant. Though we're sure this is a fine toilet, it doesn't make the best background setting.

And that is that. We'll be back next month with the regular Homemade Heroes section, so until then, keep your toys away from the crapper.

PALMER'S PICKS

Bissette's Behemoth

Steve Bissette has finally taken the plunge into the world of self-publishing with *Tyrant*, a comic that chronicles the birth, life, and death of a Tyrannosaurus rex. *Tyrant* also marks the first outing as both the writer and artist of a regular series for Bissette, who is best known for his work on DC's *Swamp Thing* and as the editor and publisher of the horror anthology *Taboo*.

A 1978 graduate of the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, Bissette won acclaim in 1984 as part of the revitalization of DC's floundering *Swamp Thing*. Along with writer Alan Moore and inker John Totleben, Bissette revived DC's muck creature, at the same time bringing a new sophistication and maturity to mainstream comic books. In stories like "The Anatomy Lesson," "Love and Death," and "American Gothic," the team energized the modern horror comic, bringing a fresh approach to the conventions of traditional horror stories.

Despite all of the accolades he received for *Swamp Thing*, Bissette left the book feeling burned out by the pressures of a monthly series and "the business practices of this industry." He then stretched the boundaries of horror fiction and comic books even further as the publisher of the ground-breaking controversial anthology *Taboo*, which he co-created with Totleben. *Taboo* serialized *Through the Habitrails* by Jeff Nicholson and *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell. It also showcased the work of Moebius, Bernie Mireault, Rick Grimes, Charles Burns, and others. Despite its impressive lineup of creators, *Taboo* ran into problems with distributors and printers. Some volumes of the series were banned in several countries due to its content.

Bissette was able to publish four volumes of *Taboo* through his own SpiderBaby Grafix & Publications between 1988 and 1990. He then reached a co-publishing agreement with Tundra Publishing that eventually soured in 1992, leaving almost 400 pages of artwork slated for future volumes of *Taboo* without a home. *Taboo* is effectively dead, but some of its scheduled material has already appeared in other venues. Hopefully, most of the stories will eventually see print.

Creator Steve Bissette uses his skill as a writer to keep the information packed into *Tyrant* from being dry and tedious.

Bissette gave up the hassles of publishing and returned to the drawing board last year for *1963*, Image Comics's six-issue homage to the comics of yesteryear. The success of *1963* gave Bissette enough time and money to launch *Tyrant* on the right foot. Unfettered by the legal and bureaucratic entanglements of publishing companies, Bissette is currently producing the most satisfying work of his career.

Tyrant is a very ambitious series that will last for at least 10 years, chronicling just about every aspect of the life of Tyrant, a Tyrannosaurus rex. Bissette's story, which features an intriguing combination of illustrations and prose, will run between 20 and 24 pages every other month. It will be supported by a wide range of backup features. Every issue will contain Bissette's editorial comments in a section called "Myrant," letters from readers will be printed in "'Rant," footnotes to the main story will be detailed in "The Gizzard" (because "dinosaurs didn't have appendixes"), and the "*Tyrant* Media Guide" will review various dinosaur movies, comics, models, trading cards, and books. Occasionally, Bissette will even print a short comic feature. The serious tone of *Tyrant* will also be balanced in every issue by Mark Martin's "Bless The Beasts," a humorous one-page strip about two tyrannosaurs on Noah's Ark.

The details of *Tyrant*, right down to the insects and plants that the dinosaurs tromp over, are backed by research Bissette has been doing since he was a little kid. He blends the fanciful notions of dinosaur fiction with the educated conjecture of respected paleontologists. While the story will be as accurate as possible, glaring errors will

Cover illustration to *Tyrant* #1.

Hey, lookee! Another dinosaur from *Tyrant*.

be corrected in "The Gizzard" and trade paperback collections of the story. Bissette hopes his representation of dinosaur life will provoke a healthy debate among readers: since most of the scholarly knowledge is based on different interpretations of paleontological findings, he will settle on the version that best suits his story.

Bissette uses his skill as a writer to keep the information packed into the story from being dry and tedious. He doesn't resort to using talking dinosaurs or time-traveling humans to carry his story. Instead, *Tyrant* is told through lush panels and expository captions that bring life to the various inhabitants of Tyrant's world. Bissette's detailed prose presents a great deal of information while moving the story along at a brisk pace.

Bissette's artwork shines in *Tyrant*. His vibrant pen and brushwork bring a sense of liveliness and motion to the beautiful prehistoric landscape. While dinosaurs are typically represented as unfeeling, ferocious beasts, Bissette draws his creatures with definite expressions and emotions. You can see the surprise, fear, and anger on the faces of the dinosaurs in *Tyrant*. These gestures and expressions carry Bissette's story and enhance his prose.

A definite departure from Bissette's work on horror comics like *Swamp Thing* and *Taboo*, *Tyrant* is also unlike anything else being done in comics, movies, or books. If you are familiar with Bissette's previous work, or if you are just looking for a new reading experience, you owe it to yourself to pick up a copy of *Tyrant*. ☆

PICK OF THE MONTH

***Underwater*:** *Yummy Fur*'s Chester Brown returns with this long-awaited new series that promises to take his work in a new direction. The story examines events that transpire over several weeks in the life of a woman. Drawn & Quarterly publishes this comic, which should be in comic stores right now.

Tom Palmer Jr. is a New Jersey-based freelance writer who can't be expected to come up with a snappy bio every month, dammit!

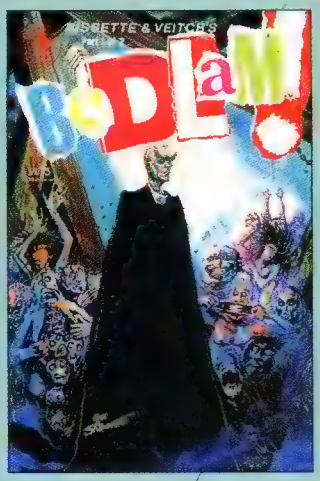
Tom's Recommended Reading

***Tyrant*:** The first issue of Steve Bissette's new comic series will be out this September. Bissette plans to publish the series for at least 10 years on a bimonthly schedule, releasing paperback collections every year. If you can't find *Tyrant*, you can write SpiderBaby Grafix at P.O. Box 442, Wilmington, VT 05363, for subscription info.

***Taboo*:** Bissette's legendary horror anthology was published by SpiderBaby Grafix and Tundra. Issue #4 is available from SpiderBaby at the above address, and issues #5 and #7 and *Taboo Especial* are still available from Kitchen Sink. For a catalog, write to Kitchen Sink, 320 Riverside Dr., Northampton, MA 01060.

***Swamp Thing*:** Bissette penciled the majority of DC's *Swamp Thing* between issues #16 and #50. Issues #21-#27 were collected in the *Saga of the Swamp Thing* trade paperback and issues #28-#34 and *Annual* #2 were reprinted in the *Swamp Thing: Love and Death* TPB.

***Bedlam*:** In 1985, Eclipse published this two-issue collection of short stories by Bissette and Rick Veitch from *Heavy Metal*, *Epic*, and other anthologies. Check your local retailer's back issue boxes for this series, which reprinted such gems as Bissette's "Pick of the Litter" and Veitch's classic *Peanuts* parody, "Nutpeas."



SpiderBaby Grafix & Publications: Bissette's company is also the co-publisher with Borderlands Press of *From Hell: The Compleat Scripts*, a series of four books that features a rare look at Alan Moore's original scripts for *From Hell*. The first volume is out in hardcover for $95; a softcover version is forthcoming. For more information, contact Borderlands at P.O. Box 146, Brooklandville, MD 21022.

Miscellaneous: Steve Bissette helped create *1963* for Image and worked on issues #2-#4 of the mini-series. Bissette has also written many critical essays for film and horror magazines, and is the co-author (with Stanley Wiater) of *Comic Book Rebels*, a selection of interviews with Scott McCloud, Dave Sim, Todd McFarlane, and others. He also wrote *Aliens: Tribes*, a novella with color paintings by Dave Dorman that won him the Horror Writers Association's 1993 Bram Stoker Award.

Steve Bissette's Recommended Reading: Here's a quick look at some of the stuff that Sturdy Steve thinks you should read:

Very Vicky by John Mitchell and Jana Christy; *Sin City* by Frank Miller; *Deadface*, *Alec*, *From Hell*, and others by Eddie Campbell; *Vengeance of the Aztecs* by Mitch Waxman; *Through the Habitrails* by Jeff Nicholson; *Jar of Fools* by Jason Lutes; and *True Swamp* by Jon Lewis.

Dinos & *Tyrant* ™ & © Stephen Bissette *Bedlam* © Steve Bissette, Rick Veitch, and Eclipse Comics.

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

It's time once again to test all that worthless comic book knowledge you've accumulated in that coconut of yours when you should've been out giving swirlies to all the geeks in your neighborhood. What follows are 25 of the hardest questions ever slapped together by a band of unshaven fanboys.

This month, we're grading your comic knowledge against the crappiest things that happened to C-3PO in the *Star Wars* trilogy. The higher your score, the bigger a fanboy you are.

score	rank
0-5	Thinks he failed to turn off trash compactor and believes Luke squished. Chastises self thoroughly.
6-12	Tells Ewoks to release friends or he'll use his "powerful magic." The furry bastards ignore him and make preparations to cook Han Solo.
13-19	After being slapped around by a big fat legless crime lord, has eyes pulled out by a beaked rat.
20-24	While sightseeing on Tatooine, pisses off a Tusken Raider and gets his arm lopped off.
25	While relaxing in Bespin, gets insulted by another rude C-3PO unit, then gets blown apart by surly stormtroopers. Later fixed by Chewbacca, who yells at him, then turns him off.

1. Asteroid M was the base of which supervillain?
A) Brainiac
B) The Coda
C) Magneto
D) Mastermind

2. Spider-Man first defeated the Sandman with the help of:
A) a high-powered fan.
B) some plaster of Paris.
C) a vacuum cleaner.
D) a copy of *Harbinger*. See, he started reading it to Sandy, and when he fell asleep, Spidey put the kibosh on 'im.

3. The Overlord is the ruthless mastermind of which criminal organization?
A) Hydra
B) The Vicious Circle
C) The Firm
D) Intergang

4. The X-Man villain known as Sauron named himself after a character from the book:
A) *The Lord of the Rings.*
B) *The Time Machine.*
C) *War and Peace.*
D) *The Scarlet Letter.*

5. The supersecret organization known as Checkmate first appeared in which comic book?
A) *S.H.I.E.L.D.*
B) *Action Comics*
C) *Captain America*
D) *Suicide Squad*

6. The cyborg superassassin known as Overtkill debuted in the pages of:
A) *Spawn.*
B) *Youngblood.*
C) *Cyberforce.*
D) *Vanguard.*

7. In *Akira*, where was Akira kept?
A) In a converted supermarket refrigeration case
B) In a cryofreeze field
C) In a refrigerated underground vault
D) In a sealed mayonnaise jar that was sitting under the Funkenwangles' porch until noon today

8. Though he went on to become Daredevil's greatest foe, the Kingpin first appeared in:
A) *Captain America.*
B) *Amazing Spider-Man.*
C) *Super-Villain Team-Up.*
D) *Marvel Team-Up.*

9. Who among the following characters from Alpha Flight's original roster is still alive?
A) Snowbird
B) Puck
C) Guardian
D) Marinna

10. In post-*Crisis* continuity, Lex Luthor I was presumed dead when:
A) he was caught in an avalanche while skiing.
B) his yacht went down in the Caribbean.
C) the jet he was piloting crashed.
D) O.J. Simpson paid Lex a visit and found him hanging out with a waiter.

11. What led to Spider-Man's first encounter with Nightcrawler?

A) Professor X sent Nightcrawler to invite the wall-crawler to join the X-Men

B) The Beyonder brought them both to his planet during *Secret Wars*

C) Spider-Man believed the reports that the X-Men were criminals, and went to the X-Mansion to bring 'em in

D) Nightcrawler believed Spidey was responsible for the death of his friend

12. The foot race between Wally West (Flash, or the former Flash, or whatever he is now) and Superman was won by:

A) Flash.

B) Superman.

C) Florence Griffith Joyner (and you wouldn't believe the endorsement deals).

D) nobody. As it turns out, that race was post-*Crisis* but pre-*Zero Hour*, so it doesn't mean anything. Neat, huh?

13. Batman prevented the death of President Reagan at the hands of which superassassin?

A) Hugo Strange

B) The KGBeast

C) Chimera

D) The NKVDemon

14. The third series of *Amazing Adventures* reprinted early issues of:

A) *X-Men* (vol. 1).

B) *Avengers.*

C) *Fantastic Four.*

D) *Spider-Man.*

15. Jean Grey, Scott Summers, Lois Lane, Clark Kent, and the older versions of Beavis and Butt-Head all appeared on a cruise ship in which book?

A) *Superman: The Man of Steel #36*

B) *The Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix #1*

C) *Eternal Warrior #25*

D) *WildC.A.T.s #8*

16. The very unpleasant Doomsday was created on the planet:

A) Krypton.

B) Thanagar.

C) Earth.

D) New Genesis.

17. In one of his earliest outings as Spider-Man, Spidey tried to join which superhero team?

A) The Avengers

B) S.H.I.E.L.D.

C) The X-Men

D) The Fantastic Four

18. Which of the following sword-and-sorcery-type products did not generate an ongoing comic series?

A) *Spelljammer*

B) *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*

C) *The Crystal Shard*

D) *Dragonlance*

19. The original Nomad was actually:

A) Jack Monroe.

B) Frank Castle.

C) R. Matthew Hawkins.

D) Steve Rogers.

20. Which supervillain created the Avenger known as Jocasta?

A) Dr. Doom

B) The Robot Master

C) Ultron

D) Modok

21. Which of the following "collector's items" hasn't been seen in a while?

A) An issue with a fake bullet hole in it

B) A make-your-own cover with Colorform figures

C) An issue with a really cool, really shiny, really expensive cover

D) A well-written, well-drawn comic that was commercially successful. It shouldn't be that hard to come by, but pretty much every big comic company has lost the knack for making 'em. Ah well, at least we still have chromium.

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22. In a move that led to the formation of the Avengers, Loki caused Iron Man, Ant-Man, and the Wasp to battle the Hulk by:

A) impersonating the Hulk and vowing to enslave the human race.

B) making it appear as if the Hulk was demolishing a railroad bridge in order to destroy a train.

C) framing the Hulk for the destruction of the Baxter Building and the near death of Ben Grimm.

D) promising them all a crack at his scrying pool so they could sneak a peek into Rogue's shower.

23. Why did the post-*Crisis* Superman have to take an aluminum baseball bat and beat Krypto the Superdog to death?

A) He was going on the carpet (and the padding, and the floor, and into the room below)

B) Whenever Jimmy Olsen came over, Krypto would grab Jimmy's leg and show him some "Krypto power"

C) He was doing really...unpleasant things with the other neighborhood dogs

D) The post-*Crisis* Superman never beat Krypto to death with a bat. This whole joke is in pretty bad taste

24. Spider-Man's Aunt May, with the help of a friend, kept trying to hook Peter Parker up with a girl who eventually turned out to be:

A) Mary Jane Watson.

B) Gwen Stacy.

C) the Black Cat.

D) Lorena Bobbitt (good thing nothing ever came of that).

25. Who was the first X-Man to meet Gambit?

A) Professor X

B) Wolverine

C) Rogue

D) Storm (who, in what was one of the more ridiculous and annoying storylines on the planet, was believed dead, but it turned out that only a fake Storm was dead, and the real Storm was alive and well in the body of a child in Illinois. Yes sir, now that's storytelling) ☆

stupid *but* TRUE...

Lex Luthor: one of the coolest supervillains around. (The post-*Crisis*, LexCorp-owning Luthor, I mean; the pre-*Crisis* one sucked.) Check out the backup Luthor story in *Superman* (vol. 2) #9—or the *Lois & Clark* trade paperback—to see him at his foulest. Anyway, DC recently screwed up this excellent character by killing him and having his annoying Australian son, Lex Luthor II, show up. What made this all the crappier was the fact that, as it turns out, Lex Luthor II was a clone of Lex Luthor (who "killed himself" by crashing a jet after learning he was dying of Kryptonite poisoning) with the original's brain, spinal cord, eyes, and miscellaneous nerve endings and stuff, which were kept in a tank of Kool-Aid or something (like that drug dealer in *RoboCop 2*, which sucked much less than *RoboCop 3*). A classic comic villain was turned into a joke because of some cheesy 1950s B-movie plot. Every month, we have fewer and fewer good comic book villains. Sad, but true.

Luthor's brain (which is pretty disgusting looking. Eewww!) ™ & © DC Comics

A	N	S	W	E	R	S
1) C	2) C	3) B	5) B	6) A	7) C	8) B
10) C	11) D	12) A	13) B	14) A	15) D	16) A
19) D	20) C	21) D	22) B	23) D	24) A	25) D
					17) D	18) C
						9) B

the WIZARD OF CARDS

By Stephen Shamus

Once again, Marvel Cards are on the horizon for a very unusual fifth set so far this year. Apparently, people just can't get enough of their favorite Marvel heroes and heroines on cardboard. Marvel has a set totally painted by the Brothers

More Marvel Products!

Hildebrandt—Tim and Greg—slated for an October release date, possibly even late September. The 140 cards cover all the Marvel Universe characters. However, this set's a little trickier than past sets in the area of chase cards and how they are to be distributed.

There are 10 Holographic Foil cards and nine Power Blast cards—which are the standard (these days) foil-etched, cool-looking bonuses—randomly inserted in packs. The Holo-Foils include Captain America, Carnage, Daredevil, Hulk, Iron Man, Punisher, Scarlet Witch, Spider-Man, Venom and War Machine. The Power Blasts are all X-Men characters, including Gambit, Sabretooth, and Wolverine. And if that's not enough, there's a Gold Plate signed set, in which every card in the regular set comes in a version that has the Hildebrandt brothers' signature gold foil-stamped. The basic hobby packs have 10 cards in a pack and 36 packs in a box, with one card in each pack being a Gold Plate card. The Holo-Foils in this packaging are gold-foil stamped and come one in every three packs, while the Power Blasts are one in six. These packs have an MSRP (for those of you not as hip as me, that's manufacturer's suggested retail price) of $1.79.

In the magazine variety, packs contain 14 cards—one of which is a Gold Plate—with 36 packs per box. This time, the Holo-Foils are done in silver and come packed one in every four packs. These packs will probably sell for between $2.49 and $2.99 a pack. Again, the Power Blasts are one in six. Lastly, in the Wal-Mart exclusive 20-pack jumbos, the 11-card packs, which will sell for between $1.99 and $2.29, contain red-foiled Holo-Foils which come packed one in four, while the Power Blasts are (again) one in six.

SkyBox has a two-series Superman set on the way. Both series contain 90 cards, and the exact same cards and photographs are contained in each one. The cards are oversized, at 2 1/2" by 4 1/2" (the same as the Sandman cards), contain all-original painted art by a variety of artists, including Dave Dorman and Bill Sienkiewicz, and follow Supes from his beginnings through today. The first edition, the Superman: Man of Steel Platinum Edition Premium Edition, features cards with all-foil borders. Packs contain six cards and carry a suggested retail of $3.99 per pack. Chase cards include a four-card Forged in Steel set, featuring all-new pieces of Superman art on cards with embossed-foil borders, and a SkyDisc, numbered SD3, that shows Clark Kent changing into Superman. Odds of finding one of the Steel cards is one in 18; for the SkyDisc, it's one in 120.

The second version—Superman: Man of Steel Platinum Edition Collector's Edition, doesn't feature foil borders; the cards use a metallic ink, but not necessarily to border each card. The price is cut down to $1.19 for a pack of six, but the SkyDisc cannot be found in these packs. Nor can the Forged in Steel cards, but what you *will* discover are six Spectra-Etched cards featuring all-new artwork of Superman. Look for both of these sets on your retailers' shelves in October.

From Topps in October comes the Aliens/Predator Universe card set. This is a premium issue that comes packed at eight cards per pack with a suggested retail of $1.25 per pack. All cards are foil-stamped and feature artwork from the Aliens/Predator comics by Dark Horse as well as brand-new stuff. Included in the set is a 12-card subset entitled New Visions, which presents artwork of the popular series as seen through the eyes of some of today's artists, including *Shadowhawk*'s Jim Valentino. There are two other subsets: a 15-card Operation: Alien subset, which tells a story through the cards, and another 15-card subset, which retells the story of the bloody fight between the Aliens and Predator. Randomly inserted Topps Finest Aliens/Predator cards are the only chase cards, but this variety is very popular. For those not familiar with the Topps Finest

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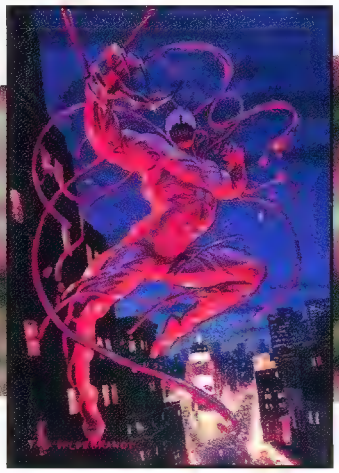

For those who can't get enough of their favorite Marvel characters (yeah, there just isn't enough Marvel stuff out there), an all-new card set by the Brothers Hildebrandt is on the way.

sports cards, they feature all-Chromium fronts and top-notch backs, and are among the hottest sports cards around. Expect to get two of the Aliens/Predator versions per box.

Also from Topps later this year, probably around the fall or winter, comes Marc Silvestri's Cyberforce. This 90-card set is a super-deluxe set, and each eight-card pack will set you back $1.89. It's a mix of original and pick-up art. Look for more details next month.

Topps has signed a deal with Harris Comics to produce a 90-card Vampirella series, which will include a special nine-card subset devoted to Kathy Christiansen. Who, you ask? Well, she's the lovely lady seen at all the comic shows as Vampi, and she'll appear in photos on trading cards for the first time. This, too, is a high-end set, and will cost you between $1.50 and $1.89 for an eight-card pack. You'll have to wait patiently, though, as these babies don't hit the shelves until early '95. More info on the chase cards and such is on the way shortly.

Looking ahead once again with Topps, in January of next year, there will be a Duckman trading card series. In the same style as *Beavis and Butt-Head*, *The Simpsons*, and *Ren & Stimpy*, *Duckman* looks to be the next hip cartoon to catch fire in the comics and cards markets. The upcoming comic, also to be produced by Topps, will stay true to the cartoon, as will the card set. Right now, it's slated to be an 88-card release with 11 subset cards, possibly beincluding stickers or tattoos.

Jack Kirby will always remembered as the King of Comics. He had entire comic universes tucked away in his archives for safekeeping, and now Comic Images will bring these never-before-seen masterpieces to life. Shipping in October, packs contain 10 cards and will sell for between $1.00 and $1.25 each. Six Chromium cards, featuring Jack's Unsung Heroes, are randomly inserted, appearing three per box on average. The Villains, a three-card set which makes up the "Rare Art" chase set, comes one card per box. A limited edition Medallion card, which features an exclusive piece of art but can only be told apart from regular cards by a notation on its back, comes one in three boxes. Also, mini-press sheets, which are sheets featuring six regular cards blown down to a 5"-by-7" size, come one to a box. Lastly, if you really love Kirby and want to buy a whole case, then you get an uncut sheet of six brand-new cards.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers are the stars of not just the hottest toys, but some of the hottest cards as well. Both series have been very successful, especially the second series, which included some innovative chase cards. Besides the paralleled etched-foil chase set—which includes a etched-foil-bordered card for each card in the regular set—there is a 12-card Mighty Morpher chase set featuring the characters in the series as both themselves and what they morph into, using a lenticular technology which works like a Sportflics baseball card. As you turn the card slowly, you will see both pictures.

Disney's The Lion King cards from SkyBox (and apparently everything else with a Lion King name on it) have been tremendous-selling products thanks to the amazing movie. Burger King, which was running a special promotion that gave away free Lion King toys with a special meal deal, ran out of the toys and called upon SkyBox to produce some trading cards for them. SkyBox created eight-card clear polypacks featuring cards from the regular line. These packs have been a true hit with the kids. Also, the Lion King tin sets, sold exclusively through retail outlets such as the Disney Store and Wal-Mart, have been hot items in those stores.

Stephen Shamus is the associate publisher of Collector's Sportslook *and will be representing New York State in this year's Teen Miss competition.*

™ & © Disney

Looks like Pumbaa just caught wind of himself. What doesn't stink is SkyBox's *The Lion King* card set, selling like hotcakes.

™ & © Twentieth Century Fox

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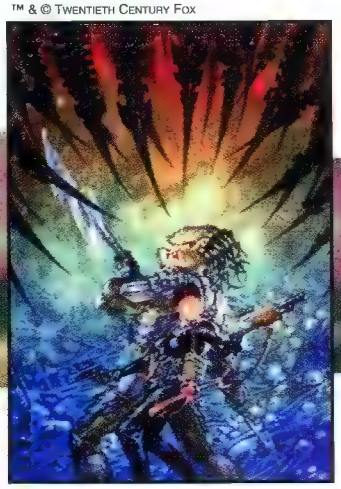

"Hey, Mr. Crab-headed Alien, what would you do for a Klondike bar?"
The Predators tackle the Aliens in Topps's Aliens/Predator universe.

Fleer Proudly Announces Marvel Masterpieces '94, featuring 158 new paintings by the world-reknowned
HILDEBRANDT BROTHERS
MARVEL
MASTERPIECE
NEO
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MARVEL Masterpieces
GAMBIT
PSYLOCKE
MARVEL
Masterpieces
OCTOBER, 1994

MARVEL MASTERPIECES

Master artists and twins Greg and Tim Hildebrandt not only share a canvas with their unique painting style—now they share their past, present and hopes for the future in this unique interview.

Fantasy art superstars in their own right, renowned fantasy painters ***Greg and Tim Hildebrandt*** became overnight comic art sensations with their spectacular work on *Fleer Ultra X-Men*. Their nine limited-edition foil cards stood out as exceptional in the *Ultra X-Men* set. We caught up with the Hildebrandt twins to get the inside scoop on the all-new *Marvel Masterpieces* cards.

In the spirit of being twins, and perhaps because they've worked closely together for so many years, Greg and Tim Hildebrandt have a unique ability to finish each others' thoughts. Throughout this interview, they both contributed their individual perspectives, though we found it impossible to separate their comments. We hope you enjoy their story!

"We built our own planet sets... and had martians and flying saucers."

MARVEL MASTERPIECES, GREEN GOBLIN, VENOM, GAMBIT and MARVEL: tm & ©1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Fleer Corp.

Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, identical twins born on January 23, 1939, in Detroit, showed great artistic promise at the tender age of two, when, according to their mom, they stayed inside the lines of their coloring books. At five, they were tracing comic book covers until their mom told them never to trace.

"Copying was okay when we were young, it was a way to learn," recalls Greg.

Art was a way of life for the boys. They began with drawing but soon became interested in animation and film. They built their own animation drawing boards and their own special effects studio in their parents' barn.

"We built our own planet sets and city scenes and had martians and flying saucers. We blew them up using powdered magnesium. We filmed it all in slow motion."

"We drew from life a lot. Anybody in our house, we'd make sit still, so we could draw them. It became sort of a family joke. Our mom would say, 'They're going to draw you, so if you're not prepared to sit for half an hour...'"

Q: Who or what were your inspirations or role models?

A: When we were four, our grandfather used to sit us on his knee and read the comic strips from the newspaper to us. They looked so big. I would mark that as the beginning of our serious interest.

There are so many people we admired as youngsters—Milt Caniff, Hal Foster, Alex Raymond, Joe Kubert and, of course, all the Disney animators and their works.

Q: Now, you're the Hal Fosters, the Milt Caniffs... you're the role models. How does that feel?

A: It doesn't sink in. It doesn't seem real because I still look at the older guys and their work...I (Tim) have a huge collection of Disney books that I continually look at...Pinocchio...I still get inspired.

Q: Where do you want your careers to go?

A: My (Tim) ultimate dream is to work in film (production and designing). We're also working on an X-Men 2099 graphic novel. It will be a painted graphic novel. We've never done anything like that. We look forward to the challenge that comes from new projects.

Greg and Tim Hildebrandt in their studio.

Q: What other projects are you involved with?

A: This is our first set of comic cards, but we've done lots of other stuff. Stan Lee asked us if we would do some developmental art for a project of his and we've done some initial character designs for an animated film.

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"We don't make any distinction between comic artists and Rembrandt."

Two of the Hildebrandt brothers' nine incredible **Fleer Ultra X-Men** *chase cards that paved the way for this historic 140-card deluxe set!*

Q: What did you think about the* Fleer Ultra X-Men *chase card assignment?

A: That was our entrance into comics as an art form...It was great...My first reaction was, *"nine pictures that have to fit as one image, yet divide up into nine cards?"*...that's impossible.

That feeling lasted for maybe three minutes and then it was like *"Oh, wait a minute, that's great."*...it was a huge amount of fun. One of the things we like to do is introduce a lot of lighting. The challenge is to put as many different light sources and colors into a picture. The more light sources you have the more difficult and complex the project becomes. Light gives drama. It's like a puzzle, fun to work out. It makes the project more interesting.

***Q: How do you feel about being chosen as the featured artists for* Marvel Masterpieces '94?**

A: It's a hell of an honor. I'm still in a headspin about being involved in comics because it's like a primal influence, it takes us back to our grandfather's knee.

There are so many great artists doing this, I really have great respect for comic artists. We don't make any distinction between them and Rembrandt...when it's good art, I don't care what the hell the subject is. When we went over to Marvel and they said, "anything you want" I couldn't believe it...I still can't. It's great...totally outrageous!

Q: Are there any characters you particularly enjoy painting?

A: Each piece is our favorite, until we begin the next painting. There's not one that stands out. It's the one that's in front of you that's most enjoyable. Each one bring a new challenge. There's something you're trying to accomplish differently as far as composition, lighting, movement, action or angle.

Q: What do you think about the Marvel characters?

A: They're great...they have personality. Conveying each characters' respective personality through the art is a challenge. I find that very appealing. There are subtleties and ambiguities, but they look great. The costume designs are terrific and fun to paint. I particularly enjoy the robot-type characters because there are lot of things going on. Shiny metallic parts, the cyborg stuff...
the metal, wires...like Cable. The more detail, the greater the challenge.

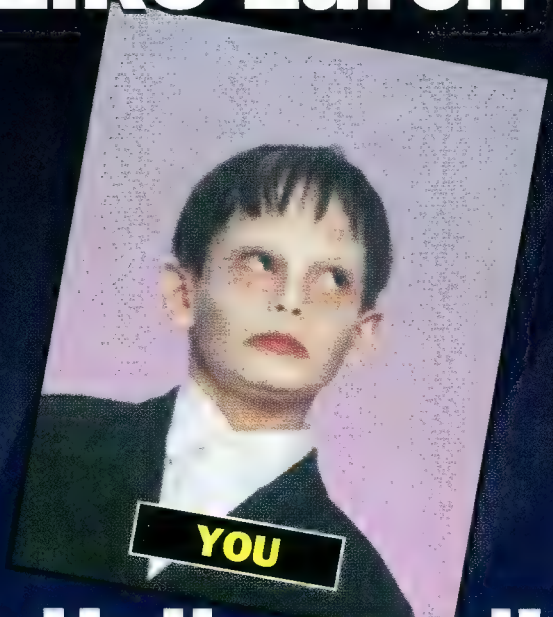
"Marvel said 'anything you want' and we couldn't believe it... totally outrageous."

Q: Are there any other Marvel plans in your future?

A: The graphic novel and we're going to be doing some covers, at least a Spider-Man cover. Also, we're doing some art for a new product—a personalized comic book. Marvel will release the first one to the market, and we'll be doing cover art, an inside poster and a trading card. The story is called **Sleeping Giants** and stars the X-Men and Captain Universe. The deal is that Captain Universe can change into anything, so he will be the floating character personalized in each story. Each individual's name goes on all three of our pieces—the cover, the poster and the trading card, as well as throughout the book itself! It really is a cool project.

MARVEL MASTERPIECES, THING, WOLVERINE, PROFESSOR X and MARVEL: tm & ©1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Fleer Corp.

"Look A Lot Like Lurch™"



Win a Trip to Hollywood!

So you think you gotta look good to make it in Hollywood? Wrong-ola! Get yourself looking ghastly and you'll be packing your bags for a wild trip to Hollywood . . . you know . . . movie stars, Tinsel Town, nice tan, love-ya-babe!

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TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay any attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1. SPAWN

Our pal Spawn's looking a bit like a football, what with that laced-up head and all. Supposedly, this heinous injury is the result of a confrontation Spawn had with "some bozo in black" in issues #19 and #20. We can't actually say how it happened, though, because those two issues have yet to be shipped, and won't be until October. (Did that Freak fella do that?) Until then, we'll have to wonder why a guy who possesses the powers that Spawn does—the ability to teleport himself into another being and "explode" out of that being, for example—can't fix his face without using a shoelace to sew it up. Maybe he just went to that same doctor Jack Nicholson visited in the first *Batman* flick.

2. SPIDER-MAN

Hey, kids, it's Peter Parker, Spider-Ninja! Either that or Elektra decided to paint webs on her ninja noggin. Anyway, it sure has been an eventful summer for our wonderful webbed hero. By now, everybody and her brother knows about the reappearance of the Spider-Man clone, and that he'll be taking up space in two of the four original monthly Spidey titles for the time being. Let's see, so far we've been treated to four Supermen, three Ghost Riders, three Robins, and two each of Thor, Iron Man, Batman, and Green Lantern. Let's face it, comicland, this multiple-character crap is getting a bit out of hand.

3. BATMAN

Now this is one ticked-off-looking Batman! He's even got the drool working. What could possibly make him this ticked off? Well, it might be one of many things. Maybe he's just read the two *Spawn* crossover books and figured he hasn't been handled this poorly since the '60s. It could also be that he was unable to get copies of *Robin* #8 or *Catwoman* #12, the two "KnightsEnd" issues that feature Bruce Wayne back in his Batjammies. Or it could be that he was ticked off to see that Jean Paul left the cap off of the toothpaste and loosened all the tops on the salt and pepper shakers in stately Wayne Manor before he left.

4. PITT

A true testament to the popularity of the Pitt character and the die-hard fan following of Pitt creator Dale Keown is the fact that Pitt is in the Top 10 more often than not, even though he's only been seen in a handful of issues over the past two years. So what is Pitt so upset about here? Might be he just realized he's recently made an appearance in every Image book but his own, missing out on the opportunity to really rake in the dough and cash in on his superstar status (i.e.: Dale, where the hell are you?). Switching gears here a sec, to answer the small bucket of mail regarding Pitt's claws and nose, yes, his claws are retractable, so he could pick his nose if he had one.

SPAWN IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS INC. SPAWN © TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS INC.
SPIDER-MAN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. BATMAN ™ & © DC COMICS. PITT ™ & © DALE KEOWN.

5. GAMBIT

Poor Gambit. You see, he's all hot n' bothered for his fellow X-Men member Rogue these days, and it just seems as though these two nice kids just won't ever get it together. Unfortunately for them, they're both mutants, and mutant couples (like Sonny and Cher, Burt and Loni, Roseanne and Tom Arnold, just to name a few) just never seem to work out. On top of that, Rogue and Gambit possess powers that could cause a romantic encounter to turn dangerous. Rogue absorbs the powers and memories of whomever she touches, while Gambit has the ability to charge whatever inanimate objects he touches with kinetic energy and make that object explode. This could lead to a very volatile and difficult relationship.

6. RIPCLAW

Ripclaw, lead singer of Kiss? Makeup, long black hair, and even the blood—way to go, Ripper, you're a shoo-in. This guy's getting pretty hot these days, and it appears that he'll be all over the place as the rest of this year and the beginning of the next unfold. He'll continue to be an integral part of Cyberforce, and by now, you've seen the Ripclaw statue and the bendable toy (pretty cool stuff, nun?). Later this year, you'll be seeing Ripclaw in his own book as well as in a mini-series with the WildC.A.T.'s own pointy-fingered tella, Warblade. It's looking like '95 could be Ripclaw's year.

7. SUPERMAN

Superman seems to be slipping a bit in the charts, but it's really not his fault. After surviving his death, the destruction of Metropolis, the collision of the Dakota and Metropolis worlds, and a rematch with DC's Hulk, aka Doomsday (anybody read that three-part *Superman, Doomsday* story? Sucked pretty bad, eh?), Supes is pretty much on cruise control these days. That's not an entirely bad thing, you see. It just means that he's not the center of attention at this very moment, leaving him plenty of time to listen to Howard Stern every morning on the way to work.

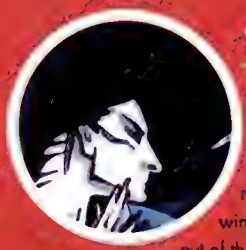
8. SHI

Looking like she just saw the giant bug that's been running around the Wizard Press offices of late (a two-inch mutant centipede, silverfish thing), Shi is another one of those characters known as "bad girls" who have been stirrin' up quite a ruckus in both the Wizard Top 10 and the Top 100 lately. Shi, which is Chinese for death, is actually Ana Ishikawa, a lady who can throw down with the best of them. She is the protector of honor—a difficult job, to say the least, when one considers the state of the world today. And while she (or Shi, if you prefer) is a compassionate soul, she's capable of cutting you from abdomen to ear if you cross her. You've been warned.

9. LADY DEATH

What? The price of silicone just went down? That would explain why she's smiling. Anywho, this Lady Death chickie sure is the epitome of the 1994 estrogen-driven comic character. She's good-looking but doesn't let anyone control her. She's soft and shapely, but don't get on her bad side, because she's also tough as nails. And while comics have always had a smattering of popular female characters—She-Hulk, Medusa, Rogue, and Psylocke, to name a few—the hot babes of 1994 do something no female character besides Wonder Woman has ever been able to do: drive sales as the lead character of a successful title.

10. MORPHEUS



These days, it seems as though Morpheus's (aka Sandman, for the Neil Gaiman-impaired out there) days might be numbered. "The Kindly Ones" storyline is winding down, albeit slowly, and the rumors out of the Dream Realm are that at the end of this storyline, Morpheus will perish and the coronation of a new Lord of Dreams will take place. Whether he buys it or not, the legion of Sandfans out there are keenly interested in this latest storyline and are feverishly snapping up anything Morpheus-related, which is why the Howard Stern looka-like (hey, two Howard references this month!) is sittin' in the No. 10 spot this month.

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

THE SPIDER-CLONE

Where do we start ripping this bag of sin a new one? Man, this is tough. Do we begin by saying the mere concept of bringing back Spidey's clone is quite possibly the single most ludicrous idea in comics this year? No? This decade? Oh, that sounds good. Next, we have to wonder what's up with that hooded cut-off sweatshirt. It would seem that villains could choke this monkey to death simply by pulling his strings. Besides, what does he need a hood for, cold weather? Certainly not to protect his identity, guys, because he *already has a mask!!* Let's not forget those cute little pouches on his ankles. What does he keep in there? His Fruit Roll-Ups? Overall, quite the costume—if you're into crappy costumes. Let's face it, gang, the sooner we're rid of Spidey Lite, the better. Now begone, ye foul-smelling false entity!

MORTOMETER: Spider-Mort here has become the first crappy character in mort history go completely off the scale!

Gambit and Spider-Clone ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Ripclaw ™ & © Top Cow Productions Inc.
Superman and Morpheus ™ & © DC Comics. Shi ™ & © William Elliott Tucci. Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido.

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TEAM YOUNGBLOOD™ & © 1994 ROB LIEFELD INC.

Team Youngblood #9

Artists: ***Rob Liefeld & Chap Yaep***
Writers: ***Rob Liefeld & Eric Stephenson***
Publisher: ***Image Comics***
Release date: ***May 1994***

Yes sir, every now and then when you think you pretty much know how things are going to work out, something sneaks up from right out of the blue and chomps down on your keister. One of those things was the return of the Levi's Kid, Rob Liefeld.

Y'see, Robbie took a hiatus back in August 1993. Recently, after approximately eight months, he returned to comics, penciling and plotting the first half of the Youngblood story in *Team Youngblood* #9, and to say that he's improved is an understatement. We here at *Wizard* have never shied away from poking fun at Mr. Liefeld's shortcomings, but heck, the *TY* #9 story and art was really good, and Liefeld's work in *Youngblood* #6 was also pretty darn spiffy.

When fans pick up on the "new and improved" Liefeld, and when they learn that only 90,000 copies of this book were printed, the lowest print run of any Rob Liefeld-penciled book (including *New Mutants* #87, at 115,000!), *Team Youngblood* #9 is gonna start smokin'!

WINDING BACK THE ATCH

Value then: $7.50
Value now: $8.50

One year ago this month, the Wizard Comic Watch spotlighted *Archer & Armstrong* #8/*Eternal Warrior* #8, the first appearance of Ivar the Timewalker.

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COMIC watch

WILDC.A.T.s™ & © 1994 AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT INC. DBA WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

WildC.A.T.s #2

Artists: ***Jim Lee & Scott Williams***
Writers: ***Jim Lee & Brandon Choi***
Publisher: ***Image Comics***
Release date: ***September 1992***

So...what makes *WildC.A.T.s* #2 a choice book for Comic Watch? Is it the cutting-edge, superspiffy holographic cover? Nope. The "gotta own all o' them gimmick covers" fad has gone the way of the dinosaur. Is it the coupon inside for *Image Comics* #0? Uh-uh. That thing expired a ways back (and the book kinda sucked, anyway).

This book shows signs of smoking because of the WetWorks backup story at the end of the ish. In case you don't recall, *WetWorks* #1 was first solicited back...oh, during the Carter administration or something. Now, years after the original solicitation, *WetWorks* is finally out—giving people reason to care about the team's debut in this ish.

As a side note here, has anybody noticed the strong comeback Image has managed to put together in the hot-book market? Way to go, guys—keep it up. ☆

WINDING BACK THE ATCH

Value then: $3.00
Value now: $4.00

One year ago this month, the Wizard Comic Watch spotlighted *Solar, Man of the Atom* #23, the first appearance of Solar the Destroyer.

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PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER!

Image X Month

Artists: The Six Image Founding Fathers
Writers: Ditto
Release Date: September
Cover Prices: Various

Leave it to the founding fathers of Image to come up with an idea that is simultaneously exciting, mysterious, unique, cool and goofy. During Image X Month, each Image founding father (Erik Larsen, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Marc Silvestri, and Jim Valentino), will work on a book other than the one he created. These crossover—or "X-over," hence the promotion name—books will include *Cyberforce* #8, *Savage Dragon* #13, *ShadowHawk* #0, *Spawn* #25, *WildC.A.T.s* #14, and *Youngblood* #9. The possible combinations are interesting, yet no one at Image is saying anything. Marc Silvestri isn't letting the cat out of the bag, stating, "The opportunity to work on—oops! Guess I can't say anything yet. Well, let me just tell you it's going to be worth checking out." The project is generating rampant enthusiasm amongst the participants. "Everybody at Image is really excited about Image X Month," states Rob Liefeld, adding, "It'll be fun to see our creative energies put towards each other's books. I'm just happy to be working on something else for a month—variety is the spice of life!" Jim Lee is psyched as well, stating that Image's strength has "always been in its talent. When we started Image Comics, all we had was our talent, and that's what Image X Month is all about." The project has an added twist for Lee, as it will be his "last work before I take my hiatus, and it'll be a fun project to do before I take some time off." Jim's right, any way you slice it: Image X Month promises to be a boatload of fun for creators and readers alike.

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Batman Adventures #25

Artists: Mike Parobeck & Rick Burchett
Writer: Kelley Puckett
Release Date: September
Cover Price: $2.50

DC has listened to the masses, and this September, *Batman Adventures*, one of the most consistently satisfying comics on the shelves, is getting some overdue special treatment. No, there are no cover enhancements or bagged trading cards, or any of that other nonsense going on here. September is a celebration of the recent critical success that the *Batman Adventures* series has been enjoying as of late, and DC is giving us two reasons to be happy. First off is *BA* #25, which features the first appearances (in *BA* continuity) of Superman and Lex Luthor! It appears Lex wants a contract that a certain company holds, and the company happens to be Waynetech! Will our heroes be able to stop Maxie Zeus from destroying Gotham City in his attempt to acquire it for Luthor? This 48-page extravaganza is highlighted by a pin-up section, with a huge roster of talent, including Matt Wagner, Mike Mignola, Dave Gibbons, and Kevin Nowlan.

Part two of the *Batman Adventures* festivities is *Batman Adventures Annual* #1, a 64-page jam which features not only the appearance of an all-new villain, Roxy Rocket, but also has cameo villain (and villainess) showings by the Scarecrow, Harley Quinn, and the Ventriloquist, who all have *something* in common. Those of you out there with a bad case of comic book boredom, caused by today's over-rendered splash-page-fests, should find these two *Batman Adventures* specials just the antidote.

Tyrant #1

Artist: Steve Bissette
Writer: Steve Bissette
Release Date: September
Cover Price: $2.95

When he was growing up, the first thing that respected comics veteran Steve Bissette drew that captured his fancy were dinosaurs. "What inspired me to draw when I was a kid were dinosaurs," Bissette relates, "and drawing dinosaurs is what inspired me to do *Tyrant*." While working on a variety of projects during his career, including his acclaimed stint on *Swamp Thing* with Alan Moore (as well as *1963* for Image, also with Moore), he never got the chance to incorporate his love of dinosaurs into his work. With *Tyrant*, he'll be doing just that, and in a big way. "It's really boiled down to the fact that this is the story I've most wanted to tell," Bissette says, adding, "one that I had not had the opportunity to tell elsewhere." *Tyrant* tells the life story of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, in black-and-white, like *Cerebus*. Each story page in this full, birth-to-death biography will feature a combination of highly detailed art and prose. And much like *Cerebus*, *Tyrant* is a mammoth, lengthy undertaking; an epic in every sense of the word. Bissette states "this will be a 10- to 12-year project." To illustrate his point, Bissette says that the title dinosaur won't even hatch until the end of the third issue, remarking "this is going to be a long-term venture, with a bi-monthly status throughout," he adds, "I'm putting everything I've got into this one." We believe ya, Steve.

TYRANT™ & © STEPHEN R. BISSETTE

Generation X #1

Generation X™ & © Marvel Characters, Inc.

Artists: Chris Bachalo & Mark Buckingham
Writer: Scott Lobdell
Release Date: September
Cover Price: $3.95

This September, Marvel adds its twelfth (yipes!) title to the monthly mutant mix, spotlighting a group of younger mutants in *Generation X*. Banshee and the devious White Queen have banded together to insure the future of genetic misfits, operating as co-headmasters of the new Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters (which used to be the Massachusetts Academy). The Generation X team consists of eight characters. Jubilee will be the most easily identifiable team member, while the rest of the team is comprised of Husk (Paige Guthrie, Cannonball's younger sister), Synch, M, Mondo, Chamber (who has a hole from his jaw to his chest, which emits a strange energy from his mouth area constantly—which looks kinda funky), Skin, and Penance. Through this series, we'll watch these young mutants learn how to use their powers to their ultimate potential, and how to fit in more with "normal" humans. Hoping *Generation X* will be an atypical mutant book, the art chores for this book will be handled by Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham, the team that did Vertigo's *Death: The High Cost of Living* mini-series. Taking care of the scripting will be Scott Lobdell, who promises, "We're going in different directions with this title." After taking in the visuals for this new group of genetically challenged juveniles, we can see what Scott's sayin'.

The Night Man #12

Artist: John Dennis
Writer: Steve Englehart
Release Date: September
Cover Price: $1.95

While *Prototype* #13 serves as the prologue, *The Night Man* #12 is the first part of a four-part Ultra-story of corporate intrigue and deception called "Hostile Takeover." This major story continues into *Solitaire* #10, *The Solution* #13, and *Giant-Size Prototype* #1. Thus far in Ultra-history, we've seen a number of corporate entities and individuals who are trying (using the superpowered Ultras as hired muscle in many instances) to become Ultra-powerful. Among the corporate entities doing their best to achieve a "Hostile Takeover" are UltraTech, Anton Lone (Solitaire's father and sworn enemy), J.D. Hunt (chairman of UltraTech rival NuWare), the clandestine and powerful Rex Mundi (Hunt's backer), and last but not least, Gordon Bell, the deceased founder of UltraTech, whose brainwaves are operating a deadly Prototype 2000 unit. Mundi implores J.D. Hunt to shake things up a bit, and initiate a takeover of UltraTech. What ensues are major and minor skirmishes involving Solitaire, The Night Man, Prototype, The Solution, Veil, Teknight, and of course, the maniacal Prototype 2000. Will Hunt succeed in taking over UltraTech? Will Mundi stay in the background? Will Prototype 2000 go berserk and kill everyone? Will we ever have to type the word "Ultra" this many times in a two-hundred-and-fifty word paragraph ever again? Find out in September when Malibu takes *you* over with its latest, greatest Ultraverse epic.

The Night Man™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the snappiest titles shipping in September. Books marked by the *Wizard* Recommended Reading sign promise to deliver solid, well-written stories.

Action Comics #704

DC COMICS Special guest star the Eradicator shows up (you know, the Eradicator. Along with Superboy, he's the only cool Superclone introduced in that "Reign of the Supermen" story). So anyway, in this issue, the Eradicator and Supes hang out and do stuff. By David Michelinie, Jackson Guice, and Denis Rodier. **$1.50**

Adventures of Superman #517

DC COMICS Under a kick-ass cover, Superman attempts to figure out if he's really Superman (he should just check the name in his skivvies). In the meantime, he must contend with Deathtrap, who's trying really, *really* hard to trap (and most likely do something unpleasant to) the Man of Steel. By Karl Kesel, Barry Kitson, and Ray McCarthy. **$1.50**

Amazing Spider-Man #395

MARVEL The non-clone Spidey stars in this issue, and has to contend with (i.e.: smack around) this month's rider on the villain of the month carousel, the mighty nasty (and mighty hairy) Puma. By J.M. DeMatteis, Mark Bagley, and Larry Mahlstedt. **$1.50**

Batman #512

DC COMICS In the aftermath of *Zero Hour*, there's a new Batman in Gotham (yeah, that wussy Bruce Wayne has once again wimped out) and Killer Croc doesn't care who's in the suit...he just wants 'im dead. Hmmm...maybe he just doesn't like the suit. Whoever this new guy is should just take it off and let Killer Croc beat up the Bat-duds. By Doug Moench, Mike Manley, and Joe Rubinstein. **$1.50**

Brute & Babe: Omen

OMINOUS Mael and Auoro are separated by the evil Dramorg, preventing them from fulfilling their destiny. Mael then tries to find his woman...but can he? This issue also introduces Giantkiller, Insidious, Sunder, Nightbeast, Giggly the Monkeyboy, and Tam-Tam the Flatulant (naw, just the first four). By Bart Sears and Mark Pennington. **$2.50**

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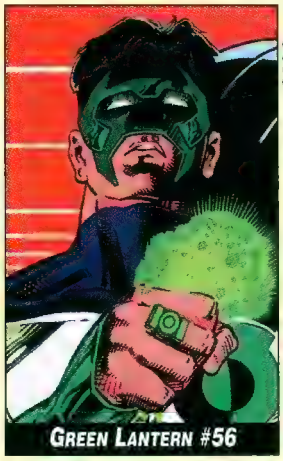
Batman #512



© DC Comics

Green Lantern #56

© Marvel

Incredible Hulk #423

© Paladium Limited Partnership

The Lone Ranger and Tonto #2

Codename: Stryke Force #7

IMAGE After that little tizzy aboard SkyWatch last ish, Stryker and crew must deal with the death of their fallen comrade. They have no time to mourn, as the creature that did the deed is still lurking...and he's got an appetite for Image characters. (Y'know, topped with a little cheese and a dash of paprika, that li'l Troll fella would look mighty tasty...) By Marc Silvestri and Brandon Peterson. **$1.95**

Detective Comics #679

DC COMICS The Ratcatcher returns! Two-Face busts out of prison! Catwoman just busts out, period! Well, Catwoman doesn't really appear in this ish, but as soon as we heard bust, we figured she had to. Ah, well. By Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan, and Scott Hanna. **$1.50**

Freak Force #9

IMAGE It's alien invasion time, and Cyberforce has been invited to join the party. Can both teams save the planet? (Or at least Rob Liefeld's travelling Youngblood spaceship?) By Erik Larsen, Keith Giffen, and Victor Byrne...er, Victor Bridges. **$1.95**

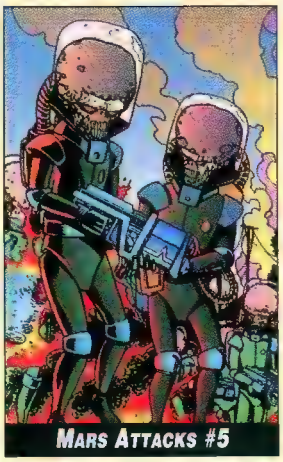
Green Lantern #56

DC COMICS Oa is now a wasted planet. The Corps is in shambles. Kilowog's skull has been turned into a ashtray. Anyways, this ish continues the story from last month's #0 issue. So who wears the ring? Kyle Rayner or Hal? Can't say...but it's discovered that the ring has another power. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.50**

Incredible Hulk #423

MARVEL The climactic conclusion to "Myth Conceptions" has Hulk and Agamemnon go head-to-head with the hordes of Hela and her Asgardian underworld. By Peter David and Gary Frank. David says of the ish: "I tried to do a climax that really has a mythic feeling to it. I tried to give Gary Frank a chance to cut loose here, depicting quite possibly the Hulk's greatest battle, as

MORE PICKS



Mars Attacks #5

The Ray #6

the hordes of Hel are in a raid against him." **$1.50**

★ John Byrne's Next Men #28: Lies #2

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Jasmine is reunited with all the other Next Men (namely Nathan, Jack, Bethany, and Danny) as well as her...husband??? Concerned about Jazz's recent memory loss, they try to help her reconstruct all her memories of life outside the Greenery. Written and drawn by John Byrne, who has a tough task this issue: "#2 is the one where I'm trying to convince everybody that the last 28 issues [including #0] were really a lie," he says. "The previous issue was not a hoax, not a lie, not an imaginary story...but maybe everything before it was." **$2.50**

★ The Lone Ranger and Tonto #2

TOPPS This is the issue that starts it all! And it's the second issue, so you get two starts in one series. Not bad. Anyhoo, this ish prompts the break-up of the Ranger and Tonto. They track down stolen artifacts and the outlaws that took 'em...or what's left of 'em. By Joe R. Lansdale, Tim Truman, and Rick Magyar. Lansdale says of the ish, "Tim and I decided what we wanted to do was create a rendering of the Lone Ranger that was true to the source, but viable in the '90s, without being a slave to current opinion or political correctness. We also, most of all, wanted to create a version that was true to our own spirits." **$2.50**

Mars Attacks #5

TOPPS In this, the final issue of this absolutely wonderfully gross mini-series, the final showdown takes place! It's the Martian armada versus the combined nuclear submarine fleet of the United States and Russia. Let's go, Earth! By Keith Giffen and Charles Adlard. **$2.95**

Prime #16

MALIBU Introducing Turbo, Prime's new teen sidekick. (And this sidekick'll probably wind up being older than Prime.) This ish signals the end of the whole bad-ass "Rogue Prime" story, as allegations fly about Prime's criminal and immoral conduct. All this, plus the Greens are moving to New York. (And what will love interest Kelly think?) By Gerard Jones, Len Strazewski, and Darick Robertson. **$1.95**

Prophet #7

IMAGE The transfiguration of Prophet begins as D.O.C.C. transforms him to deal with the Disciples. (Perhaps to also battle the threat of the Decepticons?) By Rob Liefeld and Stephen Platt. **$2.50**

The Ray #6

DC COMICS The Ray is dragged into a hostage crisis by Black Canary, and the kidnapper still manages to escape with the hostage. Unfortunately for our heroes, he escapes into outer space! (Hello!) By Christopher Priest, Howard Porter, and Robert Jones. **$1.95**

R.E.B.E.L.S. '94 #1

DC COMICS After last month's rip-roarin' #0 issue, Vril Dox, Lobo, Stealth, and company are on the run from their former comrades, L.E.G.I.O.N., and that's just the fun part. With Green Lantern guest-starring, one wonders whether he's on the R.E.B.E.L.S.'s side or the L.E.G.I.O.N.'s. And what the hell can R.E.B.E.L.S. stand for? Real Entertainment Beats Extremely Lame Stories? By Tom Peyer, Arnie Jorgensen, and James Pascoe. **$1.95**

★ Sandman #64

VERTIGO/DC With Thessaly's assistance, Lyta Hall discovers evidence that her infant son Daniel is still alive. All that, plus Morpheus makes a fateful decision. ("Yes, I think I *will* do Letterman.") By Neil Gaiman and Teddy Kristiansen. **$1.95**

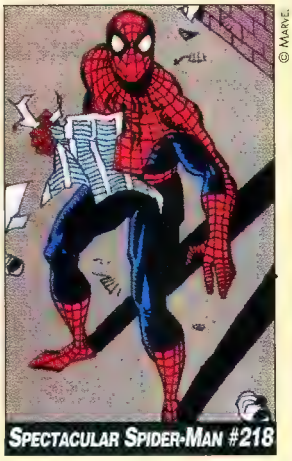
Sludge #11

MALIBU After fighting Lord Pumpkin (very cool bad guy, boys and girls) and the Dragon Fang (we don't know who he is), Sludge gets no rest as the Bash Brothers (new WWF champions?) come to town. By Steve Gerber, Rob Phipps, and Gary Martin. **$1.95**

Spectacular Spider-Man #218

MARVEL Thankfully starring the real Spidey and not the dread-

R.E.B.E.L.S. '94 #1



Spectacular Spider-Man #218

MORE PICKS

ful Spider-Mort (hey...that could be a new title. *The Dreadful Spider-Mort.* If they can do *Fantastic Force*, they can do this.). Anyway, Spidey cleans up after the Puma mess from *Amazing* #395. By Tom DeFalco and Sal Buscema. **$1.50**

R&A THE SPECTRE #23

DC COMICS "The Book of Judgment," Part 1 (of 3). With all that's happened in *Zero Hour* an' all, Jim Corrigan learns that his former fiancée has died, but she remains trapped in the land of the living. As the Spectre, does he have any hope of giving her the peace she deserves? By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. Ostrander says, "It's a good issue for new readers to come in. Someone is trying to kill the Spectre's former fiancée, but just because she can't die doesn't mean she can't be hurt." **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN #52

MARVEL This month's extra special guest star: the insipid Spider-Clone! Hey, maybe that could be another Spider-title, too! Anyway, the Spidey clone (ugh) battles it out with Venom after the real Spidey lets the "villain" escape. Sounds kinda neat. By Howard Mackie, Tom Lyle, and Scott Hanna. **$1.95**

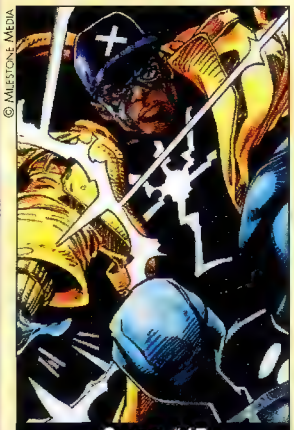
R&A STATIC #17

MILESTONE/DC "What Are Little Boys Made Of?" (Hey, just ask Michael Jackson.) Part 2 (of 4). Static stands off against his hero, Palisade. In doing so, though, he places Rick and Freida in grave danger. By Robert Washington III, Wilfred, and Angel Gabrielle. **$1.75**

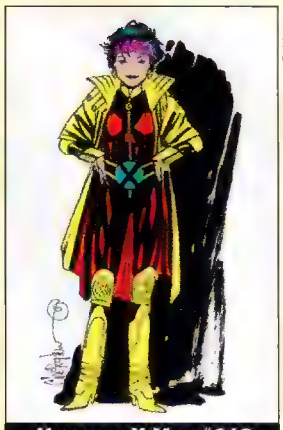
SUPERBOY #9

DC COMICS Now home in Hawaii, and coping with his new powers, all Superboy wants is a little peace and quiet. But hey—this is a comic book, so we can't allow that. And neither will the Silicon Dragons, who want to give "The Kid" a bodybag to step into. (Wonder if the Silicon Dragons are blondes from California?) By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.50**

© MILESTONE MEDIA



STATIC #17



UNCANNY X-MEN #318

© MARVEL

© MARVEL

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #118

X-FORCE #40

© MARVEL

SUPERMAN #94

DC COMICS Tests conducted on Supes's dead body conclude that it IS the real McCoy. (Whoa, talking about beating a story idea to death! Enough with this stuff already!) Meanwhile, Clark Kent—and not that wimpy Superman—discovers how to halt Conduit's rampage. By Dan Jurgens and Brett Breeding. **$1.50**

SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #38

DC COMICS OK—so we know that Superman's dead body was discovered underneath his memorial tomb. So who's this guy that's running around acting like he's the real McCoy? That's what the denizens of Metropolis wanna know. Plus, Conduit busts outta prison. By Louise Simonson, Steve Erwin, and Dennis Janke. **$1.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #318

MARVEL Jubilee and the rest of those bratty teenage mutants from Generation X move out of the X-Mansion into their new digs in Massachusetts. (Good riddance. All they did was watch *Melrose Place* and play drinking games, anyway.) By Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira, and Dan Green. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #118

MARVEL The...the Spidey clone (ugh) decides to stay in New York (which is actually a good thing, because if he returned to Armpit, Mich.—or wherever it is he came from—his chances of getting brutally murdered greatly diminish). He gets a costume (or what passes for a costume) and goes after Venom. By Terry Kavanagh, Steven Butler, and Randy Emberlin. **$1.50**

WETWORKS #3

IMAGE In this final issue of the mini-series, Prince Drakken wants war between humanity and the Night Tribes, and to start it he's gonna kill an arena chock full o' people. Guess whose job it is to stop 'im? Mmm-hmm...Dane and company. Mild violence: a definite. By Whilce Portacio, Brandon Choi, and Scott Williams. **$1.95**

MORE PICKS

Wolverine #87
MARVEL It's Wolvie versus the Juggernaut...all by his lonesome! 'Nuff said! By Larry Hama, Adam Kubert, and Mark Farmer. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

X-Factor #108
MARVEL X-Factor must scour the world for the whereabouts of Mystique. (Lookin' like she does, I'd scour the world, too! Wotta fox!) Writer John Francis Moore (of *X-Men 2099* fame) takes the team in an all-new and unexpected direction. So unexpected that Marvel doesn't even have an art team for this book. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

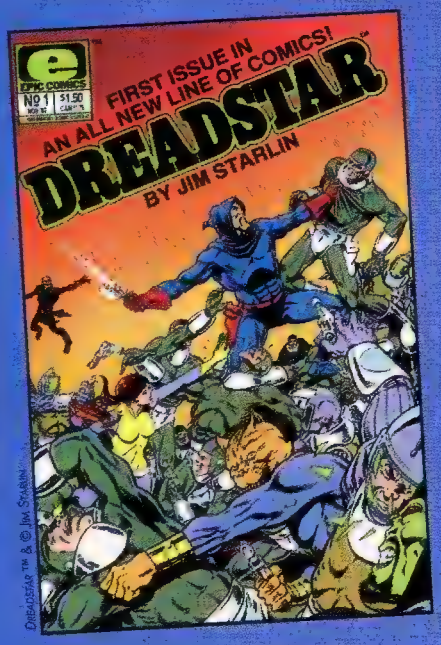
X-Force #40
MARVEL As Thornn, Feral's sister, is arrested for murder, the team relocates to a new headquarters. Plus, Shatterstar attempts to return to his own dimension. By Fabian Nicieza, Tony Daniel, and Kevin Conrad. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

X-Men #38
MARVEL Information lost during the tussle with the Phalanx must be retrieved by the team, or they risk losing that vital data forever! And...Psylocke discovers a way to regain her powers, but she needs Jean Grey's help, plus Gambit and Sabretooth settle matters that started in *Wolverine* #33. And, hey, stop the presses: Legion awakens. (Hey, just in time to battle them R.E.B.E.L. fellas.) By Fabian Nicieza, Andy Kubert, and Matt Ryan. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

Zorro #9
TOPPS Hoo-boy! Just when you thought he was burnt to a crisp in *Zorro* #1, outlaw, thug, and overall weenie Lucien Machete returns. But this time he's an official representative of the King of Spain! And guess who Machete wants to enact revenge upon by destroying him? Well, it ain't Lady Rawhide (who guest stars in this book, by the way). By Don McGregor, Hearn Cho, and Andy Mushynsky. **$2.50**

good & cheap

Good-readin' books you can still pick up cheap!



Dreadstar (Vol. 1) #1

Writer: *Jim Starlin*
Artist: *Jim Starlin*
Current Value: *$4.50*

Pack high-intensity swords and sorcery into a high-tech, futuristic setting, and you have Jim Starlin's *Dreadstar*, the popular series that kicked off Marvel's entire Epic Comics line 12 years ago, spanned three comic companies, and spawned a current Bravura limited series.

As *Dreadstar* #1 starts out, the enigmatic Vanth Dreadstar is lost in a war between the aging Monarchy and the political-mystical order of the Instrumentality, led by the Lord High Papal. Armed only with his sword of power, Dreadstar gathers a band of rebels to fight for peace, including: Oedi, a former of the peaceful cat race until the Instrumentality takes away his family and his world; the sorcerous Syzygy Darklock, a renegade High Bishop of the Instrumentality, and Willow, a blind cybernetic telepath with the ability to mentally infiltrate and control circuitry.

By the end of the first issue, we see what Dreadstar and crew can do—they successfully break into an Instrumentality treasury satellite and drop hints to the reader about the mysterious (and deadly) Plan M, which will pit them between both galactic superpowers and possibly change the fate of the whole universe. But it won't be easy...the war is closing in on them, and the Lord High Papal's dark gods empower him with enough unspeakable magic to destroy Dreadstar once and for all.

It's all non-stop action from here on out, so if you like the first issue, you'll love the rest! ☆

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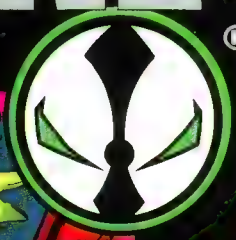


SPAWN

ALMOST MONTHLY FROM IMAGE COMICS™

TOP 100

Here's the list for AUGUST...
a countdown of the most-ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

what was hOt 1 yeAr ago...

1. Batman #500 (DC)
2. Superman #82 (DC)
3. X-Men 2099 #1 (Marvel)
4. Adventures of Superman #505 (DC)
5. X-Men #25 (Marvel)
6. Warriors of Plasm #1 (Defiant)
7. Deathmate Epilogue (Image)
8. Codename: Stryke Force #1 (Image)
9. Gen-X #1 (Image)
10. The Second Life of Doctor Mirage #1 (Valiant)

2 yeArs ago...

1. Cable #1 (Marvel)
2. WildC.A.T.s #2 (Image)
3. Youngblood #0 (Image)
4. X-Men #13 (Marvel)
5. Cyberforce #1 (Image)
6. Spawn #4 (Image)
7. Youngblood #3 (Image)
8. Youngblood #4 (Image)
9. Shadowhawk #1 (Image)
10. X-Force #15 (Marvel)

Who's in the tOp100?

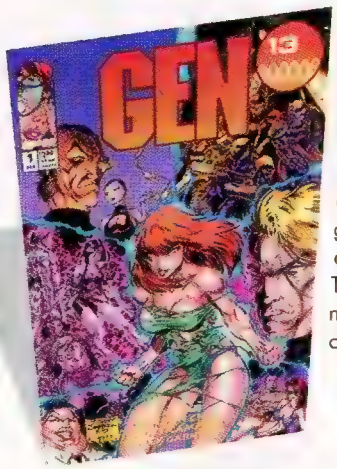
	# books in Top 10	# books in Top 50	# books in Top 100
Image	4 (+2)	15 (+2)	23 (+1)
Marvel	3 (0)	20 (+3)	31 (-8)
DC Comics	3 (-2)	14 (-4)	36 (+7)
Dark Horse	0 (0)	1 (0)	3 (-1)
Valiant	0 (0)	0 (-1)	3 (+1)
Crusade	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (+1)
Harris	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Bongo	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
Malibu	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (-1)

(+ or - indicates change from last month's listings)

1. **Spawn #24 (Image)**
2. **X-Men #37 CE (Marvel)**
3. **Uncanny X-Men #317 CE (Marvel)**
4. **WetWorks #2 (Image)**
5. **Batman #0 (DC)**
6. **Gen^{13} #0 (Image)**
7. **Wolverine #86 (Marvel)**
8. **Superman #0 (DC)**
9. **Superman: The Man of Steel #0 (DC)**
10. **WildC.A.T.s #13 (Image)**
11. Action Comics #0 (DC)
12. Adventures of Superman #0 (DC)
13. Detective Comics #0 (DC)
14. Pitt #6 (Image)
15. X-Men Annual #3 (Marvel)
16. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #0 (DC)
17. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #0 (DC)
18. Green Lantern #0 (DC)
19. X-Force #39 CE (Marvel)
20. Punisher/Batman: Deadly Knights (Marvel)
21. Cyberforce #7 (Image)
22. Robin #0 (DC)
23. Prophet #8 (Image)
24. X-Factor #107 (Marvel)
25. Superboy #0 (DC)
26. Youngblood #8 (Image)
27. X-Men 2099 #13 (Marvel)
28. Amazing Spider-Man #394 CE (Marvel)
29. Catwoman #0 (DC)
30. Hellshock #2 (Image)
31. Cable #16 CE (Marvel)
32. Spider-Man #51 CE (Marvel)
33. Excalibur #82 CE (Marvel)
34. Fantastic Force #1 (Marvel)
35. StormWatch #13 (Image)
36. StormWatch #14 (Image)
37. Doom's IV #2 (Image)
38. The Maxx #10 (Image)
39. Web of Spider-Man #117 CE (Marvel)
40. Steel #0 (DC)
41. Spectacular Spider-Man #217 CE (Marvel)
42. Deadpool #3 (Marvel)
43. X-Force Annual #3 (Marvel)
44. Deathblow #8 (Image)
45. Beavis and Butt-Head #8 (Marvel)
46. Lobo #0 (DC)
47. Fantastic Four #393 (Marvel)
48. Incredible Hulk #422 (Marvel)
49. Star Wars: Tales...Jedi: Freedon Nadd #2 (D. Horse)
50. Brigade #11 (Image)
51. Team Youngblood #12 (Image)
52. Spider-Man 2099 #24 (Marvel)
53. Flash #0 (DC)
54. Cyberforce Universe Sourcebook #1 (Image)
55. Supreme #17 (Image)
56. Venom: Nights of Vengeance #3 (Marvel)
57. Supreme #18 (Image)
58. Justice League America #0 (DC)
59. Youngblood Strikefile #6 (Image)
60. Primal Force #0 (DC)
61. Timewalker #1 (Valiant)
62. Bloodstrike #13 (Image)
63. Aquaman #0 (DC)
64. Vengeance of Vampirella #5 (Harris)
65. Starman #0 (DC)
66. Fate #0 (DC)
67. Daredevil #333 (Marvel)
68. Legion of Super-Heroes #0 (DC)
69. Newmen #5 (Image)
70. Troll #1 (Image)
71. Rebels '94 #0 (DC)
72. UltraForce #1 (Malibu)
73. Guy Gardner: Warrior #0 (DC)
74. Force Works #4 (Marvel)
75. The Spectre #0 (DC)
76. ClanDestine #1 (Marvel)
77. Generation X Collector's Preview #1 (Marvel)
78. Manhunter #0 (DC)
79. Sandman: A Gallery of Dreams (DC)
80. New Titans #0 (DC)
81. Justice League Task Force #0 (DC)
82. The Ray #0 (DC)
83. Hawkman #0 (DC)
84. Legionnaires #0 (DC)
85. Ninjak #10 (Valiant)
86. Wonder Woman #0 (DC)
87. Xenobrood #0 (DC)
88. Silver Surfer #97 (Marvel)
89. Star Wars: Droids #5 (Dark Horse)
90. The Ren & Stimpy Show #23 (Marvel)
91. Ghost Rider 2099 #6 (Marvel)
92. Aliens/Predator: Deadliest...Species #7 (D. Horse)
93. Shi #3 (Crusade)
94. Bartman #3 (Bongo)
95. Captain America #432 (Marvel)
96. Deathstroke, The Hunted #0 (DC)
97. Green Arrow #0 (DC)
98. Ninjak Yearbook #1 (Valiant)
99. Outsiders #0 (DC)
100. Avengers #379 (Marvel)

TOP TEN COMICS

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of dealers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest books. Here are the 10 best-selling comics for SEPTEMBER 1994.**



1. GEN[13] #1

ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner WRITER: Brandon Choi

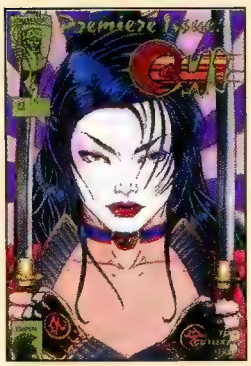
Could J. Scott Campbell and crew be settling in for a long run in the top slot? They may very well be, as *Gen*[13] #1 claims the King of the Hill status for the second straight month. For a while there, through last winter and spring, the Top Ten was a pretty volatile place, drastically changing from month to month. With the emergence of such blazin' hot trends as the bad girls and limited edition variants fads ruling with an iron hand, things have settled down into a more regular setting (and better lookin' setting, too!). With most books in this month's Top Ten listing falling under one of those two above categories, *Gen*[13] #1 owes its popularity to neither, holding its ground with a foundation of high quality and underordering. From the looks of it, *Gen*[13] may be here for a while.

2. LADY DEATH #1

ARTIST: Steven Hughes WRITER: Brian Pulido

While *Gen*[13] #1 is one of the hottest books of the summer, there's no arguing that *Lady Death* #1 is the Top Ten pageant's lovely runner-up. The Diva of Destruction has really gotten the lay of the land here in the Top Ten, making her first appearance way back in the pages of *Wizard* #33, where she clocked in at the number three position. The bad girl comic phenomenon that's rocking the comic biz shows no sign of slowing down, with four (count 'em—four) bad girl books in this month's countdown. Lady Death comes in the highest, moving up one slot since last month, and with her appearances in the *Evil Ernie: Revenge* mini-series which begins in October, her popularity may vault her into the top spot before the fall is over. Who better to be the queen of Halloween?

3. SHI #1



™ & © William Elliott Tucci

ARTIST: William Tucci
WRITER: William Tucci

Another book with more momentum than a greased fanboy on a Slip-and-Slide™ is *Shi* #1. With two issues out of two hitting the Tremendous Ten, the folks at Crusade have one hot enchilada on their hands. By the way, many readers are curious as to why Ana Ishikawa is nude at the beginning of this book (not upset, mind you, just curious). Being the ever-informative (and occasionally nude) sort of fellows that we are, we figured we'd find out for all of you. Shi creator Billy Tucci explained to us that Shi is a Samurai warrior, and when Samurais meditate, they're always in the buff. So there ya go.

4. GEN[13] #2

™ & © Wildstorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment

ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner
WRITER: Brandon Choi

After a short vacation from the charts, *Gen*[13] #2 is back with a vengeance. With an almost year-long delay, this series had fans chomping at the bit, and when the books were finally released, each new issue began selling out quicker than the last. The newer readers of the series have wanted to find out about their favorite heroes' earlier exploits; a barrage of new readers is regularly climbing aboard thanks to the "thumbs up" responses that the series is getting from fans. And hey, don't forget that #2 issues are usually ordered less than their #1 counterparts, so this ish is just plain scarce. Anyway, the bottom line here is that the entire run of *Gen*[13] is as hot as Tia Carrere was in *True Lies*.

™ & © Wildstorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment. ™ & © Brian Pulido

5. DEATHBLOW #5A

™ & © WildStorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment

ARTIST: Tim Sale
WRITERS: Brandon Choi & Jim Lee

This month's first variant cover edition comes to us in the form of *Deathblow* #5A. This book, like the other Homage variant cover editions—including *Gen*[13] #5A, *Kindred* #3A, *StormWatch* #10A, *Union* #0A, and *WildC.A.T.s* #11A—appeared as only one out of every four copies. This book is also our first Top Ten Family Values Book of the Month. How so? Well, in this ish, Deathblow—with cancer ravaging his body, mind you—attempts to drown his sorrows with some booze and gets smashed at a strip club, beats the bejeezus out of some bad guys who're up to no good, then picks up one of the strippers, and heads on back to his happening bachelor pad for some monkey business. When we grow up, we wanna be just like him.

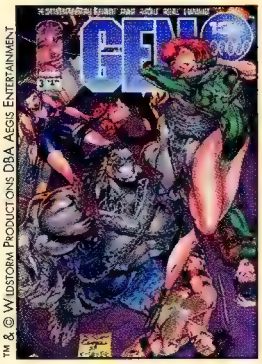
6. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1

ARTIST: Buzz
WRITER: Tom Sniegoski

Another longtime Top Tenner that refuses to leave, *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1 moves up three of places this month. With the fine folks at Harris Comics putting Vampirella on a regular monthly schedule (hey, neat trick!), Vampi is enjoying a tsunami (that's a really big wave) of popularity, with the first four issues of her new series receiving significant secondary or back issue market attention. Unlike Harris's first Vampi series, the print runs on *Vengeance* aren't as skimpy as our heroine's costume, but the busty bloodsucker's legions of fans have increased since those days, and first-day sell-outs of *Vengeance* books aren't unheard of. From cover to cover, a smokin' book.

™ & © Harris Publications Inc.

7. GEN[13] #3



™ & © WildStorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment

ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner
WRITER: Brandon Choi

What is left to be said about *Gen*[13]? Let's see, the feature story on page 68 covers just about every base—heck, it even has a few comments by all them Homage fellas who put the book together. Go read it. The *Gen*[13] #1 listing at the top of this chart explained just how hot this whole freakin' series is, so we won't get into that again. The *Gen*[13] #2 write-up in the number four position went into why this series is so popular with the fans, which leaves us with just about nothing to say here. Well, looks like we'll have to think of something. In the meantime, though, let's talk about Spider-Clones...

8. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #149

ARTISTS: Ross Andru & Mike Esposito
WRITER: Gerry Conway

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Oh boy, here we go again with this one. Let's explain how a book 18 years old can exist in a countdown with the rest of today's younger, faster, more athletically inclined releases. This book features the first appearance of the Spider-Clone (ugh), who has been seen recently in the pages of the four major Spidey titles. The clone (or is it actually the true Peter Parker?) is going to be fighting crime (clothed in his jammies, it appears) in two of the four major web-books, so this old book is picking up lotsa market steam. Will it last? Seeing as how this particular issue of *Amazing Spidey* is almost two decades old (Yeesh!), finding a copy in really nice shape is pretty tough, so it just might.

9. KINDRED #3A

ARTISTS: Brett Booth & Sal Regla
WRITERS: Brandon Choi & Jim Lee

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Another one of the eight WildStorm Productions variant cover editions (all featuring Whilce Portacio artwork), *Kindred* #3A is still in the countdown, dropping four notches since last month (we feel like Casey Kasem saying that). If you haven't been following it, this book has a pretty cool story, one in which we get to see that nifty Backlash fella tangle with Frenzy (the world's largest evil Ewok on steroids). The *Kindred* series as a whole has been a back-issue dynamo, with issues #1 and #2 fairly difficult to track down in most areas. While this series doesn't get ongoing status, look for Backlash to get his own series sometime in October.

10. SHI #2

ARTIST: William Tucci
WRITER: William Tucci

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The second issue of *Shi* looks like it will have the same market legs as the first, which could mean an extended visit to the comfy confines of Top Ten Land. The entire bad girl boom is as hot as an *NYPD Blue/Melrose Place* crossover show, and *Shi* is one of its forerunners. This issue is referred to in the back of the book as the "quiet" issue, setting the stage for a whole mess o' carnage to come. By this story's end, our girl Ana (Shi's real name) has fought a guy with gusto, severed his head and written her death symbol (An ankh? No, "Shi", silly.) in his blood on the wall. The kind of gal you wanna bring home to ma, eh? ☆

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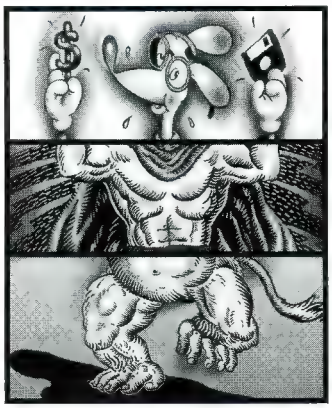

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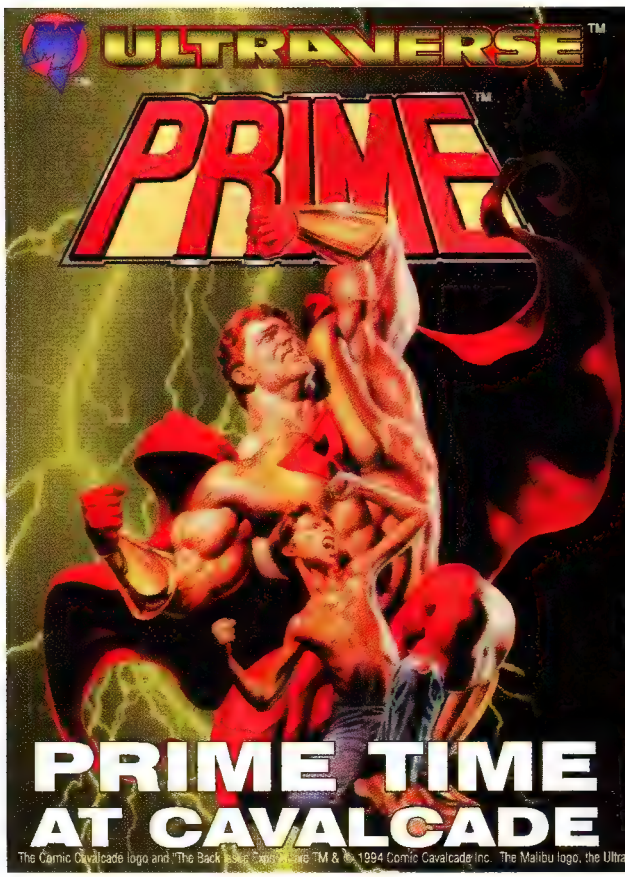

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Wizard Market WATCH

by **Jon Warren, Marc Wilkofsky, and Rob Samsel**

The Heat is Still On

This long, hot summer draws to a close, but the mercury still rises to alarming levels all over the comic industry. Marvel counts down to the landmark 400th issue of *Amazing Spider-Man*, DC zeroes in on readers with *Zero Hour*, Image improves its image with *Gen*[13], and variant covers, the latest gimmick of choice, keep the fans and collectors hopping.

RECENT RELEASES (1991-1994)

Do you possess a Spider-book featuring images of a mysterious young man skulking in shadows, visiting graves, and phoning old women? Well, hang on to it! You own an early Spider-Clone (re)appearance, a book well worth keeping these days. Spot the surrogate Spidey in several books, including *Web of Spider-Man* #114-#116, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #215-#216, and *Spider-Man* #49. People eagerly anticipate his reunion with "our" wall-crawler, in *Web* #117.

Other hot Marvels include the X-books featured in this year's mutant crossover, "The Phalanx Covenant," an intro to the next big X-team, Generation X. The excellent *Marvels* series, which surprised and pleased both readers and retailers, is still selling well in the back issue market. However, the #0 issue shows little secondary market or back issue sales interest; it sold fairly well, but can still be found on the racks.

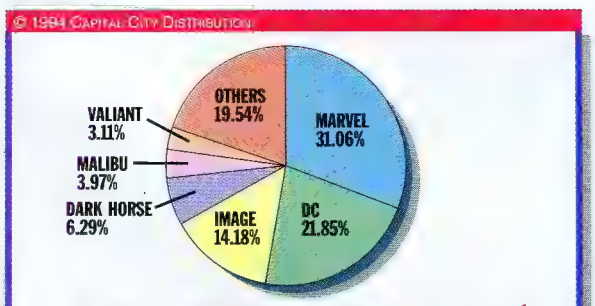
DC's long-awaited and much-needed *Zero Hour: Crisis in Time* mini-series has seen fantastic sales from day one. Each issue of the mini-series is selling out, along with the crossover issues—*Flash* #94 and *Hawkman* #13 lead the pack in market interest, with their important connections to the main storyline. DC should have enormous success with its Zero Month issues. Collectors are gobbling up issues of *Showcase '94* #8 and #9, featuring previews of the series, as well as 1991's *Armageddon 2001* #1 and #2, which introduced characters Waverider and Monarch/Extant. Also, the Superman time travel story arc from 1991, "Time and Time Again," enjoys some interest, as it sent Supes through several eras in time and introduced the Linear Men, who play a significant role in *Zero Hour*. However, the just-released trade paperback, reprinting *Action* #663-#664, *Adventures of Superman* #476-#478, *Superman* #54 and #55, along with other related *Superman* issues, may slow down the sales of each issue.

The recent KnightsEnd books are also moving well in the market. The lack of supply to meet demand for many of the issues makes them tough finds. However, the upcoming entrance of a new Caped Crusader into the Batmythos may adversely affect the values of the Knightfall and other Knightbooks. Will anyone want a story about the fall and rise of Bruce Wayne when he ceases his role as the Batman?

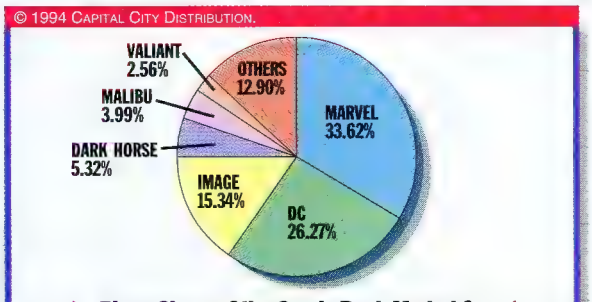
Image's variant cover editions for its recent Wildstorm books remain both popular and hard to find. This summer, Image took 25% of the copies of eight different issues, and slapped a dynamic Whilce Portacio cover on 'em. Variant editions of *Deathblow* #5, *Gen*[13] #5, *Kindred* #3, *StormWatch* #10, *Union* #0, and *WildC.A.T.s* #11 have shipped, with the lower-ordered *Deathblow* and *Union* books reaching high values in stores. Most retailers either tack a high price on these editions as soon as they open the distributors' cases, or sell them at low prices—even cover price—to their best customers. The last two editions will be out soon, which will please collectors waiting to see the entire eight-piece poster formed by combining all the covers.

Meanwhile, nothing seems to extinguish the flames of the explosive *Gen*[13] series. The first three issues fetch incredibly high prices thanks to their quality stories. These garnered the series massive popularity; in turn, the issues have turned into extreme rarities. The popularity of *Deathmate Black*, the team's first appearance, must delight retailers who now get about six bucks for a book they once sold for less than cover.

New Malibu and Valiant books continue to sell steadily. The upcoming "Hostile Takeover" crossover should help Malibu's line of books, and the big V enjoys solid sales and new fans, thanks to its "Chaos Effect" event. Unfortunately, price resistance by collectors



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for JULY, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for JULY, according to Capital City Distribution

Dollar Share:
Image wins big this month, gaining 4.28 points from last month thanks to its wide variety of qualitative books. DC's *Zero Hour* mini-series helped bring its dollar share up 3.73 points, and Marvel enjoyed a 3-point increase; its "Phalanx Covenant" crossover probably caused this.

Piece Share:
Image's market share grew 3.56 points this month, followed by DC's impressive 3.45 hike. Collectors seem to be buying a larger amount of these two companies' products, pleased with their performance. Marvel dropped just a bit from last month; the high prices of the company's gimmick cover books may have lowered retailers' order amounts.

resulted in Valiant back issue prices suffering some blows. But entertainment-hunting readers should continue to regularly pick up both publishers' books, especially with the upcoming intros of cool characters like Malibu's hero killer Rafferty and Valiant's new Geomancer.

Collectors appear entranced by and addicted to books featuring "bad girls," including Harris's ever-hot *Vengeance of Vampirella* series, Crusade's fast-selling *Shi* books (the value of #1 continues to skyrocket, with #2 right behind it), and the gorgeously valuable *Lady Death* books. New recruit Circe's appearances in *Wonder Woman* (vol. 2) #88 and #89 are sure sellers, and DC's *Catwoman* and Malibu's *Mantra* are beginning to rise in the interest 'n' value combo. Watch this megatrend speed up as the creators behind these happenin' women present some top-notch story material.

MODERN AGE (1970-1990)

Amazing Spider-Man #149, the first appearance of the Spider-Man clone, and *ASM* #150 and #151, the second and third installments of the story, are the hottest books in this sector of the market. Retailers report a wide disparity of prices for #149. In some parts of the country, retailers will pay $100 or more for a Near Mint copy, while in other parts of the country retailers report sales in the $30 to $50 range. In many cases, our anonymous price checkers discovered that retailers reporting sales at the lower prices no longer have any in stock, while retailers at the high end of the price spectrum—even those with prices as high as $200 or $250—seem to be the only sources for the book.

In fact, the phenomenal demand for these three issues dominates the conversations of Modern Age collectors and retailers. The Modern Age market has not seen this kind of demand since *ASM* #129—the Punisher's first appearance—made its move from $10 to $100 in the space of a few months. Speaking of moving, 1981's *What If?* (vol. 1) #30 and 1988's *Spectacular Spider-Man Annual* #8 have begun to move noticeably in stores, as the first book asks, "What if Peter Parker's clone had survived?" and the latter features the return of the Gwen Stacy clone. Of course, *ASM* #149-#151 will definitely be the books to watch as the clone actually makes his first full-fledged (re)appearances in Marvel's four regular Spider-books.

Crisis on Infinite Earths, the twelve-issue maxi-series from 1985 which attempted to tie together and clean up the DC Universe, moved up in the price guide this month, due to the surge of interest created by the *Zero Hour* mini-series. Collectors should watch out for *Tales of the Teen Titans* #44, which features Robin's transformation into Nightwing. This character might just be swinging around in a Batsuit soon...

Black-and-white magazines published by Warren Publications are heating up. Leading the way is *Vampirella*, the original series that spawned Harris's current line of bestsellers. But don't overlook *Creepy* or any of the other Warren titles from the 1970s. All of these seem to have caught on with collectors recently as the progenitors of the hot "bad girl" comics.

SILVER AGE (1955-1969)

The market for Silver Age Marvels and DCs rages on again this month. After the strong showing at the Sotheby's auction of rare comic books in June, Silver Age collectors appear as adamant as ever in their belief that prices for top books can do nothing but rise. As evidence of the demand for top-grade key books, look at some of the auction results: a copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 in VF (Very Fine) brought $16,000; a Near Mint copy of *X-Men* #1 netted $4,000; a restored VF copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (first appearance of Spider-Man) raised $7,500. The strong attendance at the auction, along with competitive bidding, further verifies the huge market for Silver Age.

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

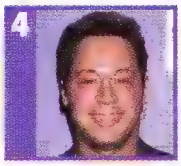
PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

1 **Todd McFarlane**
Spawn

2 **Stephen Platt**
Prophet

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

3 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill



4 **Joe Quesada**
upcoming: *Ash*

5 **Greg Capullo**
Violator

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

6 **Marc Silvestri**
Cyberforce

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

7 **Rob Liefeld**
Youngblood

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

8 **Andy Kubert**
X-Men

9 **Whilce Portacio**
WetWorks

PHOTO: A. ORTEGA

10 **Bart Sears**
Brute & Babe

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

1 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

2 **Peter David**
Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

3 **Neil Gaiman**
Sandman

4 **John Byrne**
Next Men, Babe

5 **Ron Marz**
Green Lantern, Silver Surfer

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

6 **Jeff Smith**
Bone

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

7 **John Ostrander**
The Spectre

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

8 **Fabian Nicieza**
New Warriors, Nova, Night Thrasher, X-Men

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

9 **Scott Lobdell**
Uncanny X-Men

10 **Chris Claremont**
Aliens vs. Predator: Deadliest of the Species

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE DEALER SURVEY.

The Golden Record reprints of *Fantastic Four* #1, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, *Avengers* #4, and *Journey into Mystery* #83 made their way into the price guide this month. Published in 1966, these were exact reprints of the original issues, except they lacked a cover price and the interior ads. Packaged with a 33-1/3 LP record, these prevail as hot commodities with today's Marvel collectors, especially if sealed with the original cellophane wrapper.

Demand for Silver Age DCs continues, as well. Flagship titles *Showcase* and *The Brave and the Bold*, with their plethora of first appearances of major characters like the Justice League of America, the Flash, and Green Lantern, remain as hot as ever. But we also notice a strong interest in obscure DC titles. Silver Age DC collectors are among the most devoted of comic book collectors. Many of them, known as "completists," mean to own every DC comic printed from 1955 to 1970.

GOLDEN AGE (1938-1954)

In 1953, Rinehart & Company published *Seduction of the Innocent*, Frederick Wertham's landmark study which attempted to link juvenile delinquency to comic books. The work represented seven years of research and launched a national outcry that ultimately lead to the formation of the Comics Code Authority in 1955.

Wertham illustrated the book with photos of comics depicting excessive violence, sex, torture, etc. A bibliography was included in early editions, but was removed from later editions due to legal action from comics publishers.

For years, collectors have prized comics mentioned in or used to illustrate *Seduction of the Innocent* (collectors use the abbreviation "SOTI" when advertising to buy or sell these issues). They also prize actual first editions of the book itself. These secure as much as $800 with the rare bibliography page intact.

A particularly strong recent market for SOTI books caused collectors to pay premium prices for some of the top-drawer titles. Hot issues include the *Reform School Girl* one-shot; *Killers* #1; *Blue Beetle* #54; and one of the most sought-after of all, *Phantom Lady* #17, for which Wertham's caption read: "Sexual stimulation by combining 'headlights' with the sadist's dream of tying up a woman."

Collectors highly value these comics, as they represent some of the weirdest examples of comics ever published. They also delineate a time in history when the Federal government pressured self-censorship upon comics publishers, which took form through the Comics Code Authority. Although it is less influential in the comic industry, the Authority still exists to this day. ☆

Jon Warren, Marc Wilkofsky and Rob Samsel are regular contributors, and they know the comic book market like the back of their hands.

Market WATCHERS

Dear Wizard,

In *Wizard* #34, your price guide says that *Megaton* #3 is the first appearance of the Savage Dragon, but it also says that *Savage Dragon* #1 contains his first appearance. I am a big Savage Dragon fan—could you clarify this for me?

Wade Shoemaker
Shelbyville, IL

Savage Dragon Clarification, take one: he first appears in *Megaton* #3, and the *SD* #1 appearance marks his introduction; both are listed as such. There's a difference between our 1: and I: references. If Country Girl makes her absolute first appearance in a book, that book is listed as 1: Country Girl. If her full background is depicted in a book—as in an introduction, rather than an origin—it'll be I: Country Girl. We also use the I: listing for the introductions of various teams, like the Global Guardians, abstract things (like DC's Millennium Plan, the plan of the Guardians of the Universe to choose ten people as saviors), and the first app's of characters as something else, like Wolverine as Patch. Now I'd like to pose a question to *you*, Wade, and your fellow Watchers: would you like to see the I: reference bite the dust? We at *Wizard* don't want to cause any confusion among our readers. Let me know, people!

Dear Market Watchers,

First of all, I would like to say I am happy that *Wizard* has devoted a letters column specifically for the price guide section.

My question regards an error on one of the comics I have. My copy of *X-O Manowar* #19 has two covers on it. Does this printing error add value to the comic? I have also discovered that this issue is the first appearance of Commander Sirot, who is now a member of Valiant's *Armorines* title. Any help would be appreciated.

Jeff Painter
Southern Pines, NC

Don't get your wallet's hopes up, Jeff; these days, a double-cover edition of a Modern Age comic holds as much worth as O.J.'s alibi. Today, anybody can go to a printing store and have an extra cover attached to their issue of *Deathbreast* #36. Sorry, Jeff. However, most double-cover Golden and Silver Age books, which are more difficult to manually create, have high price tags. Also, if the inside cover is in better condition than the outside, up goeth the overall grading of the book itself. So look for those types of misprints, but not Modern Age ones.

As for *X-O* #19, yes, it was Sirot's first appearance, but it doesn't seem to have much importance currently (that could change, though). Sorry...but thanks for the kind words 'bout this column!

Controversy alert! The following three letters "speak out" on the "Keep it bagged or not?" discussion that's been heating up this column:

Hey, Wizard!

In *Wizard* #34, David Baxter said to keep opened polybagged comics in the bag, as long as you cut the bag evenly at the top, but you said that that would make it a damaged book.

I bought two *Adventures of Superman* #500's, opened one to look at it, and one I kept in the bag. What I'm wondering is whether or not I should take the other one out of the bag. It would deteriorate from the chemicals in the bag, but it would be wanted less by consumers if I slit the polybag. Help!!!

Travis Newman
Galax, VA

Dear Market Watchers,

I totally agree with Pompeo Balbo from *Wizard* #36, about trashing the polybags, 'cause they really suck! Someone told me that since I took my *Adventures of Superman* #500 out of the polybag, it is worth nothing. I say Mylite all the way!

Patrick Nickell
San Diego, CA

Continued thataway

Dear Wizard,

In *Wizard* #36, Pompeo Balbo said, "Who cares if people don't want your comic if it's out of the bag," and, "Put it in a Mylite with an acid-free backboard." But real "Watchers" know that comics that have been repaired, even by trained professionals, fetch much lower prices than the old, faded, wrinkled, unrepaired books. It would seem that removing a comic from its polybag and putting it in a Mylite would be like performing an early repair. So when the polybooks are old and yellow, people will still prefer them over a damaged and repaired book. So, if you want to plan for the future, leave it in the polybag!

Dan Premo
Allegany, NY

Well, guys, first of all, *A's of Supes* #500 ain't worth too much, bagged or unbagged. Travis, you will not commit a single transgression if you do what Patrick did, and free that book! This way, you'll have another Bloodlines card, and you can play with that neat-o acetate covering. If you must, you could become a speculator by buying another copy to keep "preserved" for those mysterious "consumers" in your future; *Wizard* does not care to promote this practice. You should collect comics for mostly fun and reading! BUT—Dan has a viable idea regarding the similarity between opening a polybag and repairing a book: you're "defacing" the book either way, and collectors just want something that's totally untouched.

As Pompeo suggested, if you choose to open that ol' bag, do it carefully, and rebag the book in a Mylite with all of its contents, keeping any cards in a separate, labeled sealer. As always, I welcome all comments on this hot subject—tell me why I'm right on, or dead wrong!

And here's a missive from the guy who (along with David Baxter) started the whole mini-controversy himself!

Dear Market Watchers,

I recently looked at a back issue of mine which *had* an embossed cover. I strongly use the word *had* because it was flattened in my comic box! What will this do to the value now? How should we store the comic to keep the embossment from flattening?

Pompeo Balbo
Scottsdale, AZ

At this time, that sort of problem should not affect the value of the book; imperfect embossments don't bother most of today's collectors. If you're talking missing holograms or scratched-up foil, that's another story; such a book's value may plummet. The best protection you can give this type of book is a good plastic sealer, and try not to pack your comic boxes too tightly. Thanks for the question, Pompeo!

Hasta la vista, kiddos! Keep watching and writing!
—Marc Wilkofsky
Automatic for the People

Hey, Watchers! Please send your letters to:
MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

WiN!

Wolverine (mini-series) #1!

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Missing Link

Here's your latest quest, Link Finders! Each month, we list three comic book issues that contain something in common: in content, characters, creators, or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is.

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122, and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy: all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? Of course, we won't make each contest *that* easy. You'll *definitely* have to *read* the three issues to find the answers, but hey, how hard could that be for you comic lovers? By the way, you won't have to be a regular reader of the particular titles to figure out the answer.

We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive *Wolverine* (mini-series) #1! So good luck, and good sleuthing!

Here are this month's batch o' books:

© MARVEL

Fantastic Four #170

© MARVEL

Man-Thing #15

© MARVEL

Uncanny X-Men #142

CONGRATULATIONS to Dennison Tan, of Quezon City, Philippines! He discovered issue #34's Missing Link: *Gambit* #4, *Justice League America* #75, and *Legion* (vol. 4) #50 all feature a character waking up from a coma! (We got some wild answers, though!)

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #38
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
All entries must be received by October 28, 1994!

If you can read this fine print, then you're in.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Dmitri the snail. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Missing Link #38, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Did you ever get the feeling you're being...watched? Hey, what wuz that? Did you hear that? - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 28, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on October 31, 1994 (Boo!), by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the name of the winner, available after November 18, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #38 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

E.G.O.*

Oh, Yeah...?

by Todd McFarlane

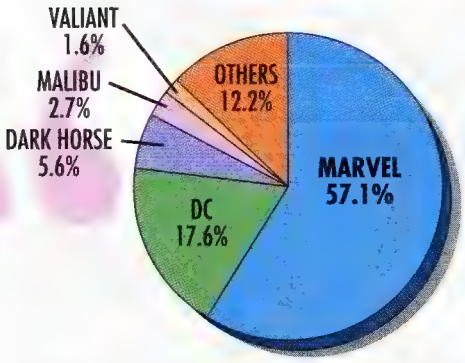
Time to have a little fun. In a recent Bullpen Bulletins page that ran through several Marvel comics, Marvel Group Editor Ralph Macchio gave some twisted Marvel propoganda slants on facts of our industry. It's actually a humorous piece filled with assorted misinformation and skewed viewpoints. Instead of going over every piece bit by bit, I thought I'd do a quick drawing that shows my feelings of how he comes about making these revelations. (Go read the article yourself for all the further funny comments he makes.)

From Ralph's column, I quote: "The good news is you, the ever-discriminating, can't-take-'em-for-granted reader, have been avoiding this mush as if it were the plague. Way to go. Despite the intense competition, Marvel titles are being purchased in increasing numbers by story-starved consumers."

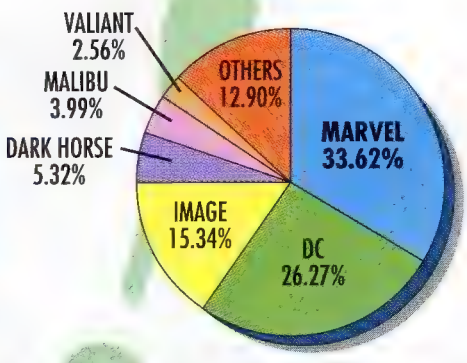
Here's my guess on how he comes to this point:

Artwork ™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions

Ralph Macchio reading the latest business info.



Piece Share of the Comic Book Companies for February 1992



Piece Share of the Comic Book Companies for July 1994

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Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the opinions stated here should write to: E.G.O., 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.

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SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

Welcome to the new *Wizard* Shows & Conventions! To help connect you with the biggest and best comic book shows and conventions in your area, *Wizard* is still printing all the stuff we used to print in this department. But we've added extra space so you can find out in advance about admission discounts, creator appearances, and other superneat stuff!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

CALIFORNIA

TUESDAYS, FRIDAYS-SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER, WHITTIER

Comics, Sports, Non-Sports Cards & POG Show, Card Town USA, 12327 Whittier Blvd. (at the corner of Penn St.), 80-94 tables @ $12 each per show, free admission, Tuesdays and Fridays: 5-9:30pm, Saturdays and Sundays: 10am-5pm, 310-693-1978. Always free parking.

SEPTEMBER 11, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

Super Comic/Toy Expo, Grosvenor Hotel, 380 S. Airport Blvd., 40 tables @ $65 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm, 415-333-8100. Guest: Image artist Dan Fraga (*Black Flag*, *Bloodstrike*, and *Supreme*). *Magic: The Gathering* tournament, amateur drawing contest, Power Rangers toys, spectacular door prizes throughout the hour, Polly Klaas Charity Auction. Free grab bags for first 100 paid attendees.

FLORIDA

SEPTEMBER 25, TAMPA

Comic Book Mega-Show III, The Colony Hotel, 820 E. Busch Blvd. & I-275, 60 tables @ $50 each, $3 admission, 10am-5pm, 407-426-7745. Gold edition comic book door prizes. Thousands of Golden Age, Silver Age, and Modern Age comics. Guest: Special signer to be announced; call for information.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 11, WOBURN

Comic & Card Show, Ramada Hotel, Exit 35 off Rte. 128, 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission (children under 16 free), 11am-5pm, 617-596-3336. $300 in credit raffles ($50 each). Consignment tables for attendees.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 10-11, CHERRY HILL

The Comics & Non-Sports Card Show, National Guard Armory, Park Ave. & Grove St. off Rte. 70, 75 tables @ $135 each, $4 admission, Saturday and Sunday: 10am-5pm, 215-968-8577. Guests: Mike Manley (artist of *Batman*), Richard Kane Ferguson (*Cry for Dawn*), Jo Duffy (writer of *Catwoman*), Paris Cullins (artist of *Superman* and *Venom*), Adam Pollina (artist of *Chromium Man*), and Chris Allen (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*). Free promo giveaways from Defiant.

SEPTEMBER 24, WOODBRIDGE

Comic Book & Comic Art Convention, The Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rte. 1 S. (across from the Woodbridge Mall), 40 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955. Guests: Rich Buckler (creator of *Deathlok*), Tom Smith (*Venom*), Kurt Schaffenberger (*Superman*, *Lois Lane*), and Howard Bender (*The Flintstones*).

SEPTEMBER 25, BORDENTOWN

Comic Book & Comic Art Convention, The Days Inn Hotel, Rte. 206 N. (off Exit 7 of the New Jersey Turnpike), 30 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955. Guests: creators from Topps Comics's *Zorro*, including writer Don McGregor, artist Hearn Cho, editor Dwight Zimmerman, and special guest Julie Bell.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 2, NEW YORK

Comic Book Extravaganza, The Marriott East, 525 Lexington Ave. at 49th St., 63 tables @ $95 each, $4 admission (50¢ off admission with this *Wizard* ad; children under 6 free), 10am-4pm, 718-441-9868. Drop ya rocks and grab ya socks! We're giving away *tons* of premium comics, cards, and collectibles. *Uncanny X-Men* co-creator Dave Cockrum headlines the guest list. Will *you* be there?

OHIO

SEPTEMBER 25, YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown-Warren Comic Con, Holiday Inn Metroplex, I-80 at Exit 229 (Rte. 193—Belmont Ave.), 28 8-ft. tables @ $45 each, $2 admission (children under 6 free), 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056. Guest: Bill Knapp (artist of *Firearm* #8 and various Triumphant comics).

PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 24-25, PHILADELPHIA

Comic Book, Collectibles & Action Figure Show, Philadelphia National Guard Armory, Rte. 1 & Southhampton Rd. (Exit 28 off the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Rte. 1 South, go 1/2 mile, armory on left-hand side), 150 8-ft. tables @ $135 each, free admission, Saturday and Sunday: 10am-5pm, 215-579-0731. Guest: Adam Kubert (current artist of *Wolverine*; he will only appear on Sunday, 9/25). More guests to be announced. Free autographs.

OCTOBER 6-9, PHILADELPHIA

ComicFestival '94, Philadelphia Civic Center, 34th St. & Civic Center Blvd., Thursday and Friday: 2-8pm, Saturday and Sunday: 10am-6pm, 410-674-5617. Guest: Brian Murray on Saturday and Sunday only, at the Zion Comics Booth.

TENNESSEE

SEPTEMBER 17, CHATTANOOGA

Card, Comic & Racing Show, Days Inn,

I-75 East Ridge Exit, 35 tables @ $45 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm, 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

SEPTEMBER 24, KNOXVILLE

Card, Comic & Racing Show, Ramada Inn, Cedar Bluff Rd., 35 tables @ $50 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-5pm, 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 3, HOUSTON

Comic & Card Convention, Hilton Hotel Southwest, 6780 S.W. Frwy. (Hillcroft exit), 35 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 9am-4pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free Marvel card pack with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 4, AUSTIN

Comic & Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 N. IH35, 45 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 10, SAN ANTONIO

Comic & Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briaridge, I-10 W. & 410 W. (behind Malibu Fun Center), 40 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1 admission, 9:30am-4pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 17, HOUSTON (CLEAR LAKE)

Defiant signing, Comics Plus, 18091 Upper Bay Dr. (off NASA Rd. 1), free admission, 11am-1pm, 713-335-1130. Guest: Jim Shooter of Defiant will be holding a free book signing. Defiant Comics is sponsoring a How to Create Comics seminar later that day at the University of Houston, Clear Lake, in the university's Auditorium, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., $3 admission, 4-7pm. Call 713-335-1130 for more information on the seminar.

SEPTEMBER 17, HOUSTON

Comic & Card Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 and Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy. (Silber exit), 50 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free Marvel pack with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 18, HOUSTON

Comic Carnival '94, Ramada Inn, I-10, Silber & Antoine exit, 7787 Katy Frwy., 60 tables @ $85 each, $3 admission (children under 7 $1), 10:30am-4:30pm, 713-335-SHOW (7469) 24-hour hotline. Guest: to be announced; call for information.

SEPTEMBER 18, SAN ANTONIO

Comic & Card Convention, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 and Wurzbach, 35 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 25, AUSTIN

Comic & Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North IH35, 45 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 25, BEAUMONT

Comic & Card Convention, Holiday Inn Beaumont Plaza, 3950 I-10 (Walden exit), 30 tables @ $40 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission.

SEPTEMBER 25, HOUSTON

Comic & Card Convention, Marriott Westside, 13210 Katy Frwy., I-10 West (Eldridge exit), 45 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 9am-4pm, 713-293-8676. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free Marvel card pack with this ad and paid admission.

OCTOBER 2, HOUSTON

Comic Collector's Convention, Ramada Northwest, 12801 Northwest Frwy., (290 at Pinemont), 100 tables @ $35 for center tables or $45 for wall tables until September 5 (then call for new prices), $2.50 admission (children under 10 $1), 11am-4pm, 713-661-0034. Guests: to be announced; call for information.

WEST VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 18, CHARLESTON

West Virginia Comic Con, Holiday Inn Charleston House, 600 Kanawha Blvd. E. (I-64 at Exit 58B, I-77 & 79 to Exit 58C), 37 6-ft. tables @ $45 each, $2.50 admission, 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056. Guest: Paul Pelletier (artist of *X-Force* #37, *The Outsiders*, and *Hulk*). ★

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

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$4.00 Admission

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Chris Allen - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Mark Waid - Flash (Sun.) **Mike Manley** (Batman)
Paris Collins - Superman, Venon (Sun.)
Andy Parks -Wonderwoman & Catwoman (Sat.)
Jo Duffy - Catwoman (Sat.)
Tom McCraw - Legionaire (Sat.)
Adam Pollina - Chromium Man & Many More

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TULSA, OKLAHOMA
SEPTEMBER 9, 10 & 11 1994

WizaRd BullPen

"Office Wars": After months of construction, rearranging, and apocalyptic chaos, all the *Wizard* staffers found themselves in brand-spanking-new office digs. To celebrate the event, the mildly immature staff decided to hold a contest, seeing who can slap together the coolest office space. Taking part in this heated battle are the teams of Dan Reilly, Bob Marshall and Dave Prager (with Phil "Deskless Wonder" Colligan as team mascot) in the price guide/research pit, Hank Bordowitz, Marc Wilkofsky and Andrew Kardon in the editorial hack-and-slash hovel, Matt Tierney and Arlene So in the angst-filled art inferno, and Brian Cunningham and Pat McCallum in the clammy editorial rookery. What's up for grabs? A free dinner, courtesy of the runners-up (i.e.: losers). Winners and pics next ish.

Congrats: To *Wizard* Editorial Assistant Bob "The Undertaker" Marshall. Besides being the subject for this month's Up Close column, Mr. Marshall won third prize in the Chiller Theater Amateur Model building contest held at the Rutherford Convention Center in Hackensack, N.J. Bob's entry was a 12-by-10-inch replica of the 1959 classic movie monster The Giant Behemoth. It was made entirely out of model clay, and it took him four months to build. Even though he's still enjoying his success, Bob has already made plans for his next creation: a statue of Gareb butt-nekkid in a public fountain in Greece.

Everyone Wins: Remember all those wonderful toys we asked you to get for the *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt? Ever wonder what happened to them? Well, this year's batch of fun stuff is being sent to the Miracle Kids Program for children with terminal illnesses at Nyack Hospital in Nyack, N.Y. All of the Batman Pez dispensers, Happy Meal toys, and comics that were sent to us will make several very sick and very scared children a little bit happier. A special thanks to everyone who entered. You guys and gals are the best.

UP CLOSE...

Bob Marshall
Editorial Assistant, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do at *Wizard*?
I proofread every single piece of...wait a minute—I compile comic price data, enter all changes in the price guide, and frighten people.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
Toying Around.

Last good movie you saw?
The Crow.

Last good book you read?
The Tale of the Body Thief, by Anne Rice.

Favorite TV show?
The original *Star Trek*.

Favorite musical group?
Dead Can Dance.

Who would play you in a movie?
A morose Robby Benson, or Johnny Depp.

Favorite comic right now?
The Sandman.

Favorite comic of all time?
The Sandman, or Silver Age Spider-Man comics.

What are/were your nicknames?
Spooky, The Undertaker, Ruler of the Undead.

What superpower would you want, and why?
I'd like to be able to discorporeate my body into a vaporous mist and slip through keyholes, cracks, etc. It might also be fun to have prehensile hair. (Sort of a cross between Robert Smith of The Cure and Medusa of the Inhumans.)

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID PRAGER

TOP 10 REASONS WHY THERE WASN'T A TOP TEN LIST IN THE LAST TWO ISSUES OF WIZARD

10. Monkeys
9. Decided to sell the Top Ten lists through QVC. Raked in serious cash.
8. Too caught up in this whole Undertaker vs. Undertaker mystery. Couldn't concentrate properly.
7. All the *Wizard* staffers had to pool their money to pay Gareb's bail and his plane ticket back from Mexico. Couldn't afford a Top Ten. (Much less two.)
6. Too busy wondering if O.J.'s gonna be in the next *Naked Gun* movie.
5. Wasted time figuring out how to explain the lack of a Hunk & Babe in this issue..
4. No matter how hard we pushed, couldn't release the enema (part of the creative process).
3. It was pre-Zero Hour *Wizard*. We didn't have Top Tens back then.
2. Had barely recovered from the news that supermodel Anna Nicole Smith married some 89-year-old guy; were rendered unconscious with the Michael Jackson/Lisa Marie wedding news.
1. Still reeling from scathing column in the back of *Gen*[13] #4. Morale real low.

✓ **COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #12** American League All-Stars Ken Griffey Jr. and Frank Thomas blast their way onto the cover of the October issue of *Collector's Sportslook*. Inside, we look at Ken Burns's documentary. *Baseball: The American Ethic* for PBS. Also, *Sportslook* puts together the greatest baseball team of all time, and then shows how the O.J. Simpson case has affected the card market. Finally, Topps veteran Sy Berger looks back at his 47-year career. **$3.95**

✓ **ER #13** The Dream Team II makes an appearance on this month's cover of *Entertainment Retailing*. On the inside, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti are in the spotlight as they talk about the formation of their new company, Event Comics. Michael Davis looks at The Big Picture, and Rob Liefeld makes more Robservations, plus *A Distant Soil*'s Colleen Doran speaks her mind about Image. And what issue of *ER* would not be complete without a word from *ER*'s Dynamic Duo, John Byrne and Beau Smith? **$2.95**

WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS VOLUME ONE, THIRTY-EIGHT (38), OCTOBER 1994
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WIZARD® 39

OCTOBER

Extra-special

SPAWN & ANGELA

gatefold cover by Greg Capullo!

- Win a trip to California to party with Marc Silvestri and the gang
- Amazing fold out poster by Quesada and Palmiotti featuring their hot new hero *Ash*
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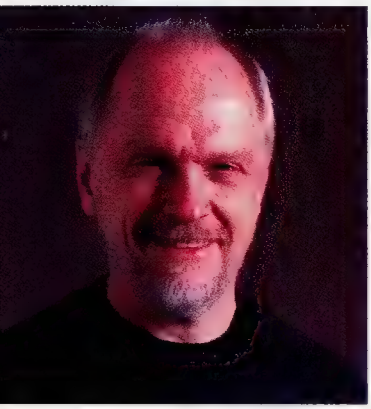
Here's looking at...BOB HALL

When one hears the name Bob Hall, images of his crisp artwork come to mind. But many are still unaware that the laid-back 49-year-old has been a writer far longer than he's been an artist: he's been scripting *Shadowman* since 1993's issue #9, and he's been a playwright for almost 20 years.

Born in Lincoln, Neb., Hall moved to New York City in 1971 and was encouraged by a friend to draw comics. His first pro assignments were for Charlton Comics, but "I can't even remember the titles," he laughs.



He hit the big time when he took an independent course in comic book art in the mid-'70s and its instructor recommended Hall to a few Marvel Comics editors. The teacher was artist John Buscema, who was preparing for his and Stan Lee's book *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*. His pupil's first professional penciling job for Marvel was on *Champions* #8. Hall also briefly held an editorial post at the publisher.

His many artistic credits include Marvel's *Avengers* series, *Emperor Doom* graphic novel, *West Coast Avengers* mini-series, and *Squadron Supreme* series. Hall is currently writing Valiant's *Timewalker* and sharing a writer/artist byline on *Shadowman*.

Always a comics fan, the University of Nebraska graduate's roots lie in the theater. Hall was never prolific on any particular series, because he took jobs directing in the theater and didn't want a regular penciling job to conflict with his theater schedule. Instead, Hall did fill-ins, one-shots, and short strings of books.

Hall's theater career was launched in the late '70s when he co-wrote the hit play *The Passion of Dracula* with David Richmond. A popular off-Broadway show, it spawned performances in London as well as a movie for the cable channel Showtime. He was drawn into writing comics by Valiant's editor-in-chief at the time, Jim Shooter, who offered Hall his choice of books. He says he picked *Shadowman* "because it was the least developed of the lot. I felt I'd have room to develop this character."

When asked about the prospects of the world outside four-color books, Hall says, "I've constantly had a life beyond comics through the theater." He then pauses and laughs, "The question is, 'Can I have a life *in* comics?'"

First comic book read...
It was what I believe was Carl Barks's first comic: a Donald Duck comic with buried treasure and pirates and a parrot.

Favorite comic of all time...
That same Carl Barks book.

Favorite work of your own...
Probably the next thing I'm going to do; my work is always progressive.

Person you'd most like to meet...
Sir John Gielgud, because he's probably the oldest, greatest actor in the world and I'd love to hear his stories.

Superpower you'd most like to have...
I wouldn't want one, 'cause I think the danger in that fantasy is that you have to get out of it on your own. The secret identity has to deal with the world and not the superhero.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Blue corn chips.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As an adult, it's my Volkswagen Fox station wagon; as a kid, my crayons.

Things you collect...
Only comics that I have read and liked.

Favorite pastime or hobby...
It used to be painting, but the more time I spend in the studio, it's hiking.

Favorite television show...
I'm a CNN junkie.

Last good movie you saw...
Wolf.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Anthony Hopkins.

Favorite cartoons...
My favorites are the old Tex Avery and Looney Tunes cartoons.

Person you'd most like to work with...
Frank Miller.

Favorite musical performer...
Bruce Springsteen.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
To find out if they say anything about me. ☆

VAMPIR™

JOHN BOLTON

High Heels Productions proudly presents **John Bolton's Vampir Collection**, an all-chromium trading card set featuring eleven of the best of Bolton's nude Vampir women and new, never before seen artwork. This compelling collection is securely packaged in a unique, three dimensional, foil-embossed crate designed by Bolton to give it that fresh-from-the-graveyard feel! The inner sleeve slides out to reveal our especially designed, double-length Maxi-Card™. Also included in this collection is a foil-embossed promotional card spotlighting John Bolton's second set in this continuing series by High Heels Productions. To ensure the collectability of these fine art sets, the print run will be limited to the amount of orders received with an over-printing of only 3%. This collection will NOT be reprinted.

John Bolton is an award winning artist who has worked on graphic novels and prestige format comic books with Chris Claremont, Neil Gaiman, Clive Barker, Anne Rice and many other assignments for every major publisher in the comics field. He is currently working on Man Bat for DC Comics with writer Jamie Delano.

Standard Eleven Card Set **$24.95 plus $4.00 shipping**
Signed Limited Edition Set **$49.95 plus $4.00 shipping**
of 662 sets, each with an additional foil-embossed autograph card signed by Bolton
Limited Edition Wooden Crate Set **$395.95 free shipping**
of 100 sets, hand painted by Bolton and includes the additional foil-embossed card signed by Bolton
Vampir Relief Sculpture Set
of 10 only! This set includes the standard set, the signed foil-embossed card, the wooden crate and one of an edition of 10 Vampir relief sculptures made from an original work by John Bolton. Call or write for availability.

ALL SETS ARE ADULT MATERIAL BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN NUDITY

These sets will be available from your local retailer from November 30th or you can order directly from High Heels Productions at 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 7QY, England. Phone/Fax 01144 (722) 410242. (please remember to include a signed statement that you are over 18) A two card, chromium promotional set of artwork not included in this collection will be sent free with any direct order quoting this ad and post-marked before October 1st.

MAKING CONTACT LATER THIS YEAR!

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